

Pastoral Care in Disaster:

A theological reflection

Joan Anne Delsol Meade

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work. The sources of information used have been duly acknowledged.

This research has not been submitted in any form for any other degree or professional qualification.

Joan Anne Delsol Meade

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the financial support given through the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom.

Elizabeth Koepping (my principal supervisor), Will Storrar and Ewan Kelly gave both academic and pastoral support for which I am grateful.

This work could not have been completed without the participation of the people of Montserrat who facilitated and participated in interviews and group meetings, and shared their insights.

My husband, Reuben, and our children Ruselle, Ben and Gartrick deserve the greatest credit for encouraging and supporting me in this work.

Abbreviations

AUC	American University of the Caribbean
CCC	Caribbean Conference of Churches
CDERA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Relief Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
MCC	Montserrat Christian Council
MCCA	Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas
MVO	Montserrat Volcano Observatory
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
SRU	Seismic Research Unit (of the University of the West Indies)
SXP1/2/3/	shared Christian praxis focus group 1/2/3
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UWI	University of the West Indies
ZJB	Radio Montserrat

Abstract

The research explores three interrelated theological problems – human suffering as encountered during the eruptions of the Soufrière Hills Volcano on Montserrat, the inadequacy of existing Protestant religious traditions on Montserrat to cope with the crisis situation, and the weaknesses of recommended models of pastoral care inherited from Western Christianity. The latter two concerns became obvious at a time of heightened demand for the churches to offer consolation in the face of natural disaster.

At the intersection of the three stated concerns is the researcher who served as a pastor in the context of the disaster. Through critical utilisation of Thomas Groome's practical theological method of *Shared Christian Praxis*, she acts as interlocutor between the theological reflections of focus groups and theological statements, including contributions from cultural art forms, originating in the wider community of people resident on Montserrat during the eruptions. Irreconcilable differences between the practice of pastoral care and the theological bases for the ministry of care are exposed.

The exploration of the spaces between expounded theory and actual practice of pastoral care in this research yields resources to explain the discrepancies and to help move forward the process for a praxis oriented approach to pastoral care that is both theologically valid and contextually relevant.

In identifying sources of traditional wisdom useful for providing care in disaster and for developing culturally appropriate models of care and counselling, the research also suggests *Shared Christian Praxis* as valuable to Caribbean pastoral theological method. It is also recommended as a way of caring and doing theology in disaster situations.

Name	M/F	Age	Relocated	Lost property	Career loss/ change	Religious affiliation	Church involvement	Lived abroad durin eruption	Spent more than 2 weeks abroad
XA	M	41-55	No	No	Yes	Anglican	Youth coordinator	No	Yes
XC	F	15-25	Yes	Yes	No	Pentecostal	Member	No	Yes
XD	M	41-55	No	No	Yes	Rastafarian	Study group member	No	No
XE	F	26-40	Yes	Yes	No	Anglican	Member	No	Yes
XF	M	41-55	No	No	No	Pentecostal	Member	No	Yes
XG	F	56-70	Yes	No	No	Methodist	Musician	No	Yes
XH	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	No	WH	Member	No	Yes
XK	M	41-55	No	No	Yes	Anglican	Lay reader	No	Yes
XM	M	56- 70	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Sexton	No	No
XT	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Member	Yes	Yes
XW	F	26-40	Yes	Yes	No	Catholic	Communicant	Yes	Yes
YB	F	26-40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pentecostal	Driver	No	Yes
YD	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	Yes	Anglican	Chorister	No	Yes
YF	M	41-55	No	No	No	Rastafarian	Member	Yes	Yes
YE	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	No	Anglican	Guild member	No	Yes
YG	M	41-55	No	No	Yes	Methodist	Men's group	Yes	Yes
YI	M	26- 40	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Driver	Yes	Yes
YJ	M	41-55	No	No	No	Catholic	irregular attendance	No	Yes
YL	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Cl. Leader/ Treasurer	Yes	Yes
YN	F	41-55	No	No	No	WH	Group member	No	Yes
YO	F	15-25	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Youth group	Yes	Yes
YS	F	56-70	Yes	Yes	No	Catholic	communicant	No	Yes
YW	F	56-70	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Member	No	No
YX	F	56-70	Yes	No	No	Pentecostal	Group leader	No	Yes
ZA	F	26-40	No	No	No	SDA	Member	No	Yes
ZD	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	Yes	Anglican	Guild member	No	Yes
ZG	M	56-70	No	No	No	SDA	Church board member	Yes	Yes
ZL	M	15-25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rastafarian	Study group member	Yes	Yes
ZM	F	41-55	Yes	Yes	No	Methodist	Cong. Steward	No	Yes
ZP	F	56-70	Yes	Yes	Yes	Catholic	Chorister	No	Yes
ZR	F	26-40	Yes	Yes	Yes	WH	Member	No	Yes
ZT	M	26-40	Yes	Yes	Yes	Methodist	Member	No	Yes
ZW	F	56-70	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pentecostal	Member	Yes	Yes

Appendix 3: SXP Transcripts

3A. SXP I: Portion of 1st meeting

Reflections on responses to the eruptions of September 17, 1996 and July 12, 2003.

XG: That time, Mrs. P was staying with me, and I stayed in my room and I heard the rumbling. So I went across to her room and I said: the mountain acting up, you know. It's making noise. I stayed in the room with her. We were listening and stones started to pelt. *(laugh)* I say: let's get out of your bed, eh. Stay in your bed. But then I say, suppose is fire? The mattress might burn. *(group laughs a lot)*

XT: Because we didn't know what to expect!

XG: Right. You hear an eruption and eruption tells you bout fire! Then we say: No. Let's go in the closet. No. Couldn't hold in there. So we sat down and listened to the radio. I hear the vehicles passing. I said I'm not going outside whatever it is. But after it lulled, we moved and came to Friths. It was frightening. Quite a frightening experience. So when it happened over here again in July, I said: Again! You know what I mean? And I went for my hard hat and put it on.

(Lots of talk about hard hats (helmets) that were given early in the crisis.)

You don't know if this time would have been worse.

XK: I just left

* What you said, you just left?

XK: I was looking after my father. I heard the pelting. I look out to make sure whether it was rocks or ash. And I sleep.

XT: I was sleeping too.

XK: I have this policy from way back in Hugo. The Lord is a sleepless God . Leh he go worry bout dat. Me go sleep.

(Lots of chatter. Some feel just the same way and refuse to be frantic- they sleep through the worst. Some were frightened, some were not. At least nobody feels pressured to belong to either category. They're just free, man)

XT: I was saying that particular September I was sleeping, and then I heard the stones. When I turn I saw all the cars going north. And I said: I'm in the house. Why should I go out there? Whatever will be will be. I went back in my bed and I ask the Lord forgiveness for what, for everything that I did *(group laughs)* and I went back to my bed just prepared to die, because I figured that was it. I mean I didn't have any control over it. *(sense of powerlessness?)* So as far as I was concerned, we were going to die. Yes! I made my peace there and whatever. *(Lots of chatter)* July 12th was the same.

XA: I had 2 suitcases packed. I was leaving the next day, going to the Bahamas. Me? The ash? I could walk in it. I see it. Oh! I just stayed in my bed, all day. When I get up I walk in the ash, I sleep in it. I not brushing. I didn't do anything.

(he has shifted the discussion from September 17, 1996 to the events of July 12-13, 2003)

XW: Not me sah! Not me.

XA: I didn't do anything.

* That was how you coped.

XA: That's how I coped with it.

XW: OK. Right.

XA: I could remember coming out the morning, and I'm going through a lot of ash trying to get in. Everywhere, lot of ash. And I said, and I'm leaving the next morning. Somebody said to me: T-, you nuh do nutten at all, man? So when you come back ee go worse, you know, all the ash. And I said: just like how ee fall, just so I go left um.' *(Group laughs)*.

(Meeting of focus group 1, SXP1, February 24, 2004)

Appendix 3B

SXP3: Meeting of March 07, 2004

[Only 3 persons have turned up, 1 SDA adult male, 1 WH young adult female, 1 adult female. I was expecting 8 persons- a good mix of male and female. The Pentecostal and Roman Catholic Churches were supposed to be represented too. The Methodist turned up in spite of the fact that a lively programme was going on in her chapel nearby. (I had to transcribe this from beneath the organ music and singing). I couldn't risk letting them go without a meeting. So, we proceed with just us 4]

* Good afternoon. Thanks for coming. Let's talk about Montserrat during the context of the volcanic eruptions. What's the most memorable aspect for you? It could be positive or negative.

ZG: Well, I'll let the ladies go first.

ZM: Well, in my case, **it's the fact that all my family left and I'm alone here.**

* You're alone?

ZG: You mean none of you entire family left back in Montserrat?

ZM: Yes.

ZR: **Me, I know about that too.**

J*: That must be a sense of loneliness?

ZG: Yea boy, that terrible.

ZM: Yes, loneliness.

ZG: Well my experience was slightly different because my whole family, all of us left. Well, I took them to England and made sure that they get into school and everything and I come back after three months, you know. The other thing though, the biggest -what should I say? **The biggest tragedy of all- was the separation of families, as you alluded to.** One time myself, my total family- my wife and my two children were in London. R and his family went to Tortola. M in Anguilla. Well, although K and A were in England. That's my brother and sister. They were 200 miles away from England where we lived! So for the three months I up there, I see my mother only once in the three months! So, the separation.

* The separation of individual families and the extended family as well.

ZG: Yea.

* Can we talk about those two things- the pain of separation and the loneliness?

ZG: Hmm hmm.

* We can start with loneliness, or you can mix the two if it's easier for you that way.

ZG: Well let me start with loneliness. We went to England in September of 97 and I came back to Montserrat on the 8th of January 1998. And when I reached , when I got to Nantes River just before you meet Rams there, police check point! Mi come

from Salem. But you know, Salem was officially evacuated, well that part of Salem where I lived. When mi get to the check point, one Salem police officer, say to me "Mr. G. , whey yu a go?" A in here mi come from, mi a go home! When dey let me pass de barrier an mi get home a night, and put mi suitcase up dere; cause remember now, all de house boarded up, and me go back down by R. and spend some time dere, play some dominoes wid de guys dem. When the night come an mi hafi go home and mi go up to de house, de windows boarded up so mi cyan even see outside, an mi realise 'Well look whey R an mi chil'ren dem be, 5000 miles!' well, mi start to bawl. I cry.

* Do you usally cry?

ZG: No! You get so void inside. And the uncertainty! The uncertainty. Look how far! Suppose mi never see mi pickney dem again?

* Yea

ZG: Dat really throw me.

*: Just missing your family, and being without them for the first time. When was the last time you cried before that?

ZG: I cry before over other things, family bereavement or anything like that.

ZM: But not for the volcano?

ZG: No, no, no. We no cry for nутten like that! Because personally, we deal with the volcano from long time. 96 especially, when we got that loud explosion in 96 and everybody from Salem left, (*turning to me*) You will remember that. We reach the hospital in St. Johns. That time, when we already reach there, you know, RA come on the air and say 'Bulletin, bulletin'. (*Laugh*) Everybody done back here When he say that, all of Salem people were already out north.

*: KG was at the radio station. I remember going to the radio to do a devotional and he was working.

ZR: I was in Cork Hill and Cork Hill to Salem-nobody was there.

ZG: Nobody dere! Even C rubbish truck people jump in the rubbish truck. And nobody want to jump in the rubbish truck to come back home! (*big laugh*) We been through this thing so many times. Four times, I've slept in my car by the Bank of Montserrat there, and over at the Adventist building at Mongo Hill .You know, when the thing go off, as soon as that was over, we go back in. So we were dealing with it. And that didn't compare with loss of the family. That was the biggest tragedy of all. That was the family. Even further, the extended family. All dem so. D gone to Canada, L gone to Anguilla, Y was in Dominica at that time, you know, so even the extended family, your cousins and so, none of them around! That was terrible. That was terrible.

*: Yes. people you grew up with.

ZG: Yea. In Salem. The situation in Salem was, here it is that all the shelters in the north were already full. So ..say in August that people have to move. So there was no space in the north for Salem people!` That's why all of Salem people went overseas. So the people who you know and grow up with, all of them gone and so. Church people! There was no church left at New Carmel SDA in Salem because all the people went overseas. Everybody.

*: (to ZM) You were saying your mother-.

ZM: Yes. My mother and my daughter left here the day the volcano started. They went up to the States for an ordinary summer vacation. School had finished. D was in 2nd form. ..., my older brother was taking them for vacation so D went up. I took her by the airport at Bramble the morning, not expecting that ... They reached up States and called me back. I was on the phone and I came off the phone and I heard the sound- this constant airplane noise. I came outside, and I said to myself 'is the mountain making it'.

ZG: Hmm hmm

ZM: Next thing, somebody called me and say 'You hear the volcano going to erupt?' You know, so it started from then, D never came back because the first year we were uncertain. We had moved away.

*: You lived right in Fort Ghaut.

ZM: Yes

ZG: OH, right in there.

ZM: And they said keep her for a year. She'd have gone into 3rd form. For another year because we were still uncertain in 96. So she couldn't come back to write O levels. She never came back, so she's going on nine years. she's away.

ZG: So she never came back?

ZM: She never came back. I go up because it's easier.

ZG: That tough. And you have to watch you daughter grow up overseas. You want to watch you daughter grow up in your eyesight.

ZM: It was tough for me....

ZR: When the eruption actually happened, I was away at a wedding, my uncle's wedding in St. Kitts. And I stayed on and they came to Montserrat for the honeymoon. So it started while they were here and I was there. And I felt trapped in the sense that I couldn't get back in to find out what was happening to the rest of the family and they couldn't get to us and all you hearing in St. Kitts was negative talk all the time, and I was really scared, and worried, and everything. But I wanted to come down here back home. I didn't get out until late September, and I couldn't get out of St. Kitts because the rest of the family came down to St. Kitts

ZG: Hmm hmm

ZM: That was after the 1st evacuation?

ZR: Yes, they came down to St. Kitts because we were living right in Harney Street on the bank of the ghaut. They came down and then afterwards I came back following after the hurricane passed. I think it passed here too because people were camping out at Gerald's.

ZG: Yea.

ZR: And where I was in St. Kitts, the area got damaged, so I came back home.

*: Damage from the hurricane?

ZG: Yes. because the people who went to Antigua from the volcano, the hurricane land on them.

ZM: Some of them went to St. Kitts too.

ZR: The land in St. Kitts caved in. I was in Sandy Point and in that area some schools were damaged and the road was undermined by sea water and everything, so.. but the loneliness part of it, after we got home and they had to go again, they went to Antigua. I had a young child at the time. Then the support of the family wasn't there anymore because everybody spread all around. So even to get to work and have the young child, I had to be bothering other people who were working. The baby was staying at stamp bureau and they were working there, but I had no. And I had a second child through the volcanic crisis when I went away for a month. When the child was born, Cork Hill had to move again so as soon as I got out of the hospital I had to fly to Antigua with the child. Then while I was there with cousins, my mother went on to England because one of my little sisters lost her eye while in Antigua- she got hit in the eye and she already had a bad eye- so they decided to move on to England in order to help her. So that other support now, because the other two [children] were in Antigua while I was down here, and I had to go up on the weekends. So, that support was gone now. So, they had some cousins by their father side who decided, when the airport went, that I'm not going to take those kids back down here. So they kept the kids, and I would go up every weekend. But even being in Montserrat, nobody else is around. Is just you Everybody else for me had already gone. Again, I had to be sharing half of a room, a one-bedroom with another person. Call it, I couldn't even bring them home, like to- the privacy wasn't there even to be close to them. So after a while, it took its toll on me, because my kids didn't even know me. They got their green card and went to the States and I was in Montserrat. And they didn't know me. And I felt lost when I call them 'this is Mommy', is like 'no! you're not Mommy!' (gasping)

ZG: oh boy.

ZR: It was tough for me and at one point I said: Look, I want my kids back. I don't care what happen. Just send them back home. So my brother came and sent them back and we just cack up in that one little room until I got a place outside the room. It wasn't the best but anything could have done at that time. And again I had to let them go again because the situation was a little bit too much for us and for them. It was really tearing so I had to let them go back. So the move too, psychologically, it had an effect on my first child because of moving. We came down from Canada the very month the volcano started and then we were in St. Kitts, and then we were back to Montserrat, then he's in Antigua with somebody else. Then we were back home with somebody else. Then he's back in Antigua. Then he's up to the States. And he's back to- all of that movement affected him and I had a very hard time trying to bring him in line. He was scared, always afraid of the dark and everything. He would cry, cry, cry. So it was tough because even when he came back into school at age five, the headteacher didn't even know what to do. Because at times, as soon as you talk to him, he would cry, and for them, they didn't know how to control him. So with help, much help, he managed to settle down. It was hard time but he settled down.

*: That's something tough. For all that has happened, I have never been alone. The only bit of aloneness I know was when I was transferred from Montserrat. There was always R. R and I were always together even though our children were away.

So tell me, what does a person need especially when it's your family that has moved- the persons you are closest to, and nobody else can fill that person's place? How can a lonely person be helped?

ZG: (*chuckle*) Well for me, let me tell you for me kind of try to deal with that kind of situation. One thing, it cost about eight hundred dollars a month, just to call R and the children, just to talk to them. The other thing, put all their picture on the centre table in the living room, and in the bedroom on the dresser, everytime you go and come that you see them, at least. you feel 'lil better that way when you got dem pictures there! And then telephone just to share their voice. But it cost money. It cost a lot of money.

* That is plenty money.

ZG: Yes. It cost a lot. So you kind of deal with- that's the second or third best thing, because that is all you could do.

ZR: That's what I do too. I go through the pictures and just relax on the bed just going through all of them. And I was keeping a diary too, like when I was in St. Kitts. While the kids' father wasn't there and everything we were going through, I just kept writing my feelings in the diary

ZG: Well, you good.

ZR: And I would go down to the seaside, just walk the beach and sing. To me, it gives a little bit of comfort. Or even when I was over in Gerald's. There was a little hill at the back of where I was, so I would go back there and look at the view, see the ferry port and what's down there and write, write a poem or just write. That's what I would do, write lots of cards and send them off ! (*a long laugh*)

ZM: I used the telephone too. I was staying with friends in the north. It wasn't the same. That in itself is another difficulty of living with people

ZG: yes.

ZR: Oh!

ZM: But then I remember, we were allowed to come into town although we had evacuated . In 96, G and I used to come in and go to town, she to her house and I would go to mine. And we would spend time at home and then go out. Drive, like sometimes we would go up to AUC, we go onto Kinsale. Now we think of the goodness of God!

(*all laughing*)

ZG: yes, anything could have happened.

ZM: I remember my friend used to tell em 'You going in every Saturday? Mark you, they going have to bring you over Belham for me to identify you because I not going in there.'

(*more laughter*)

ZM: Just going into town. It was still home, you know where you accustomed to. Sometimes I slept in my bed. That in itself was kind of comforting for me. Going in. And the telephone. calling. Because I used to call every week. I had to call D. every Sunday so I would know she was OK and that kind of thing

* Would it have been intrusive of people to try and like, say, keep your company? Would it make bad matters worse?

ZR: It wasn't the same at all.

ZG: mmm mmm

ZR: because at that time you had to deal with other people's moods. After a while people get agitated with you being around, but with the loneliness you still had other pressures because is like you have overstayed your welcome but then you couldn't do any thing else, and you had to bear with all the different attitudes that . So to be with people and still ... it wasn't easy at all.

(March 8 :the problems of relationships when you're crowded together. But who has to deal with who's mood? I beelive it's everybody. How do we get that message?)

ZG: I never had the experience and the reason to live with anybody in the north. Because remember we were in Salem for a long time until. So when we left here, we actually just go. And when I came back, *mi say whether they say is Salem evacuated or not, I had to get back to my house.* So when I start back in Flemmings, there were only about 4 people living in Flemmings. That in itself was something else.

(March 8: About Salem, Mr. is talking big politics. Why are people angry? Politics! The volcano is a small part of this whole eruption. As Cupid say, is an eruption of corruption. People sound like they're vexed with the scientists but I wonder who they're really vexed with)

ZM: Hmm hmm. Hmm hmm.

ZG: The fella E live downstairs of my sister house. JG, you know JG? And some rasta fellas live up by the observatory.

(March 8: You know E. He's the young man from church who went to the MCCA Youth Encuentro and demanded his passport. He didn't want to live in a dorm. He wanted to go home and told you "Rev. why you think I living in the unsafe zone? I cyan tek de shelter life!)

(You know JG. He's an alcoholic. I suppose he prefers to be in the unsafe zone than unwanted in a shelter)

(I suppose the rastas too would rather be left to themselves than put up in shelters where people don't want them. The observatory wasn't built yet)

ZM: yea, hmm hmm.

ZG: Nobody else live in Flemmings to talk to!

*: And this is a community where people accustomed to hail one another. You know there's somebody next door. You know there are people around.

ZG: When I got back, they told me that 59 people live in Salem, well in the area that was supposed to be evacuated at that time. But you hardly see them because everybody gone to work during the day.

ZR: You know what, I had a little bit with that after I went out to work and meet.. As a matter of fact, I actually took a very low paying job just to get out the house, so it gives you a little peace with that. The pay was just enough to pay the bus fare *(laugh)*

ZG: but it take you mind off the worry at least, yea.

(helps her to cope. Something to take the place of worry and give structure to her days.)

ZM: yes.

ZR: From then at work we started doing things together. Like we would cook and share up lunch and stuff like that. But after the office had to move over again, then I was back alone again because then I had to work from where I was living .So you were lonely again until the found a place from where the office was to operate again. But it did help a bit just going away from the atmosphere and coming back. (*coping*)

Pause

Now, one of the things that came out was the problems of living with other people for the two of you) and generally, we'd say, the people who were hosting people had their own concerns too,

ZM: hmm hmm

*M: But from your point of view, why you think that somebody would be selfish? because, OK, making you feel you overstay your welcome, is from your perspective, being selfish.

ZM: hmm hmm

*: What could be going on inside of these people to make them react that way?

ZR: Maybe because we're in their space. after a while they- they accustomed to their own little things, maybe they have a special space you pull in your chair. Now somebody in there (laughing) you don't have the space anymore. I was in a house that had in about 15 of us and then you had to take turns to cook, take turns in the bathroom, take turns to clean the bathroom and then you find that you were the one who ended up doing all the cleaning. Some of them sit down, and then .. the person in the house feel that they should cook first and you should cook later, and then you there all day, want to cook your food, and you can't cook because they didn't come to cook. So it was hard. I find myself just used to stay in the bedroom, and used to eat carkers. The most I would cook a corned beef and macaroni. I didn't worry with all the vegetables and all the starches, the things that I used to like. You just cook one quick pot.

YG: yes (a moan)

YR: You cooking what you cooking quick time and out of the kitchen. I find I was just staying in the little room. Everything for me was in there so you couldn't even bring it , because -all the beds, all the clothes- I had a barrel that I had sent home. I brought the barrel there and everything was just stuffed around in the one room, hardly any air coming in; but just to keep out of people's way, I let them use their thing and when they gone I come out.(laugh or scream?) It was driving me mad!

YG: But even though you know, and we have to be reasonable. You go and live with somebody, people don't want you to live with them forever. Maybe/Even you with your sister or your brother or your child, people want their space. You want to be able to talk freely.

YM: Yes to move up and down, to do whatever. Anytime you want to use the iron

YG: you want to iron all your clothes, put them down.

YR: in your own house, and the privacy wasn't there.

YG: People were glad to take you in, beg you to come. But when people look back now and see look this thing going on long, they begin to get edgy. yes, because I had people living with me for some time , and to tell you the gospel truth, it begin to get to me after a while. Some of their habits, you know, they come to our house and

they believe they come to a hotel. They done eat and they leave their things for mi wife to wash, you know, so with that, some people get fed up with that. Lots of different reasons .

YM: yes, lots of reasons

YR: Some of them wanted their families to come and stay with them after a while and you were taking up the space. How I ended up leaving is because the person daughter and children were coming and no more space was there so I had to cut short and we had to move out of the house. When I get to know is the daughter and the child, I say all they had to do is tell us. Some time people don't know how to come out and say, they didn't want to be the one putting you out.

YG: Yea. They don't want you to feel they don't want you, or they want to throw you out.

YR: Yes, right.

YG: Then they have trouble to just come out and say it.

YR: yes, they couldn't say it straight out.

YG: But if your daughter coming, your daughter coming. They could just say 'well, I can only accommodate you for another 2 weeks because my daughter coming.' You know?

YR: hmm hmm

YM: I encountered that sort of problem too. I went up to the States. It had to be... 97. The people had already died- 96, 97. The person I was staying with, she went up before me. And I took a message for her . She came by and collected it, left NY and went up to Boston. My brother from NY called me and told me that he got a message on his answering machine for me to call this number. Well it wasn't a number that I knew so I called, and it was a family of my host telling me that they are doing some repairs on the house and I was not going to be able to stay there any more. That is how I was told. She left me. We were living together. She saw me in Ny and she never told me! it was somebody foreign telling me 'I'm X's cousin, you're not allowed to ...'

YG: nmm nmm.

Now we could go on, but I am conscious that our time is up So maybe we should wrap this up. If you can think of anyway our Christian heritage informed or did not inform the way people reacted, in terms of what we have been discussing, like the (way we felt, the way we treated each other or were treated.

(Long pause)

(Mar 8: I tried to get to Movement 3, can't say I didn't.)

(April 7- I was really worried about nothing then, trying to rush the people. Now I've read the transcripts over a few time, they've been saying lots. It's about making connections. They speak. You LISTEN)

YM: I think initially it helped in that they offered for you to come 'E, come. You can come and stay by me. You know you can come.' But after were there a while, you see that they start to get on your nerves, and whatever and is as if there was no going back, because we knew by 96/97 that we weren't going back, you know, so I

don't know if they figured that you were going to be there indefinitely and you were going to take up more along their space.

(April 12: We're actually reflecting. Well, they were. I hadn't started to march to the beat of "our" drum. Things are certainly looking clearer now.

YG: That was the biggest thing. When you see people take you in, well . People take you in if they know well, you going back next week. But it became tiring. But when they see now that town gone, 'well, no; mi nuh want dem live ya forever.' so people begin to get edgy cause , not that people bother you or anything. But, you have to be realistic.

YM: Hmm hmm. I think ... when it started we were getting food packages and that seemed to have been a problem to some people in that it was as if we were singled out. Those who evacuated seemed to be getting a preference. 'Everybody going through it, so why can't everybody get same thing?' You know that kind of thing.

YR: Well, I know how that feels because I didn't get any packages and I had moved. But time is not there to talk.

* Would you like us to talk about that problem next week.

YR: We could do that.

YG: OK, Rev. We could talk bout dat next time.

(7th March: I feel hopeless about not being able to give structure to this meeting. Well, I said I didn't want to follow Groome to the T. I can't! Only 3 people came and yet so much chatting. They wanted to, needed to talk. Maybe this thing won't work out. They're looking for this pastor to listen. Yes, I must listen but I've got to find out something for this research. Oh, maybe that's what I need to find out- how to listen to them. Stupid! You can't get a Ph. D. that way. All 3 groups have met and I can't get these 5 movements so how am I going to work this out? When the meeting is over, they're still talking. But I didn't come here to be a counsellor. Maybe I made a big mistake expecting to learn anything this way. Themes, there are lots of them, but I need to get beyond themes. We need to know what makes them feel the way they do, get to the root of the matter. I suppose I should really listen but I'm afraid this. Can't get that fella to stop talking. But he did bring up some issues that are important background stuff- like Salem. BOY! Trouble.

(10th April: Things really weren't as bad as they seemed. I'm learning. Better learn fast cause time's running out. This work is a little more exciting because I see and feel more of what has been said. It's in the test)

(15th April: I've gone through this for themes and many are showing up in relation to the separation and loneliness that they speak about. It's really quite good.)

Appendix 5: Interview Transcripts

5A: Interview with A1 (artist #1), February 10, 2004

*Thanks for agreeing to spend this time with me. As you know I'm doing this study. I've been particularly impressed with, inspired and stimulated by your music. I think you've produced quite a lot.

A1: Thank you very much.

* And it's really mostly about your music concerning the volcanic experience that I'd like you to share. There are some songs in particular. I'm thinking of songs like *One More River to Cross*

A1: *Take the Road, Ultimate Sacrifice*- What else did I do on the volcano? *The Crisis We Face*,

* *Me Package*

A1: Right

* And a couple others I want to ask about like *Eruption of Corruption, One More River to Cross*. What's there?

A1: OK. There are two aspects of it- the literal, physical. When the volcano started, and throughout the crisis of the volcano, Montserratians have had to move from south going north. I guess for geographical, physical convenience, a river or a ghaat or a stream is always used as the demarcation between where is safe and where is not. First of all it was the Long Ground people who moved. And then the whole of town had to move. And each time it was one river going further north that was the demarcation. So we were saying each time we think that we've paid it, you hear no it's not that river, it's another. So that's the literal, obvious meaning. Of course, there's a second which I'm using a river to mean a problem or difficulty. Like it says 'every time you think you pay the cost', 'every time you start to count the cost, there's one more river to cross.' means that every time you think you've solved that particular problem, whether it's building a new home, or accepting living with relatives, or whatever, another problem pops up. Like for the business people, every time they've relocated their businesses, then they have to find another place to rebuild. The problems that the government had. Just about every different aspect in Montserrat. Increased problems. Increased problems.

*So you're not just representing your own personal situation?

A1: Certainly not. I think *One More River to Cross* is a good example representing others. The different aspects of the Montserrat life.

* There's a time you say every time we think we paid the cost, there's one more river to cross. Is that saying it was a test of some sort?

A1: Absolutely. Like I say, there are different meanings. I see it- maybe it's because captured- it literally cost us. But apart from that we ... I don't want to say that God is punishing us or anything like that. But, it's like a wake up call. and it's like every time we- I find that Montserrat people, we are very- what to say- we sort of accepted the situation. And I think generally there was a good response in terms of a lot of people saying that in spite of the crisis we still have to thank God that we are still

alive. But something else would happen again, and after that then every time we paid the cost in terms of being more faithful? Repentant? Something like that?

* Something else would happen?

A1: yes.

* A man from Salem say all his crossing done. (*laugh*)

A1: OK. The last village that was evacuated was Salem. But Salem was kind of different in that all our reports said that any place north of Belham would be safe until the scientists, the government decided that Salem would have to move. And of course it wasn't that easy as the other villages because the other villages- I guess they saw the danger and they moved. Apparently, Salem people weren't quite as convinced that they had to move. They had a lot of marches, you know, protests, speeches and so on; until I actually heard one person say that they not crossing again. The person was originally from Salem, left Salem and was back again in Salem, so he say all his crossing done. And Salem people seemed like they were prepared to take the chance. Now if they took the chance and it backfired, they would have died. Then the crossing of the River Jordan, the line the man from Salem say all his crossing done and the only river he going to cross is the River Jordan that means he is prepared to die.

* I think you mentioned dying again- well the whole song. The Ultimate Sacrifice is on that theme. You want to talk about it?

A1: OK. The Ultimate Sacrifice. 25th June 1997. There was one of the biggest eruptions and certainly the biggest death toll, 19 the total (maybe is 20, 21 or something like that). But of course I use it again to bring over something poetically. Some of the people who died were farmers and they were actually taking a chance going back in to reap agricultural products and, in a sense, feeding the nation. The song was really saying that- well of course the ultimate sacrifice means, you can say that Montserratians had been making a lot of sacrifices. Even sharing your home is making a sacrifice. Basically the song was saying that they made the ultimate sacrifice because they lost their lives.

* You talk about the sacrifices that people made.

A1: (*laughing*) OK. Licks there is like not getting - let me see if I can put myself back in the mood when I wrote it, what to say- not getting the benefits of your labour.

* Struggling?

A1: Struggling, right, right. It could be like you plant something and the goats eat it off. licks could be something like that, or it could be like a hurricane that came and Montserrat didn't have any this year, but we've had disasters even before the volcano, well, getting those bad things happening; but then it had come to this stage that I'm saying ultimate sacrifice.

* You talked about people feeding the country. You said in the meantime, my country must be fed. Do you think that it was intentional? For the people doing it, did you really think there was that political commitment to feeding the country or was it more than that?

A1: It was that. I think they wanted to feed the country. Of course, it was beneficial to them in that they had already planted the food and they wanted to get them sold or disposed of and get something for it. So, it was that. It was more than that in the

sense that the country had to continue to function in spite of the crisis and the problems we were having that that sort country must be fed means that we continue to function locally, and of course the assistance from the British government.

*: You made some reference to my daily bread. I suppose they needed the money as well.

A1: Right. Right. Right.

* Are you trying to get into the mind of those farmers, or is it maybe putting together what you know from experience, or comments you had heard, or things that you have shared from growing up?

A1: It's like all of the above. (laugh). OK, in the literal sense again, I tried to put myself into what was happening to them when those people realised that they were caught and they are going to die, and what they were going through. I hope it wasn't long and painful. The other thing really, it says my heart burns, my blood boils, my feet ache.' My heart burns' is like the feeling for the country, all that sort of thing. 'My blood boils' was anger really, and then 'my feet ache' was just hard work.

* Interesting. I could get the physical representation of what was happening but I never really caught this.

A1: Well that really was what it was saying.

* Anger, then. What about? Can you talk about the sources of anger?

*: Well a lot of people were displeased. There were a lot of people who thought that, First of all externally, the British government weren't dealing with us well; a lot of people felt that the local government wasn't dealing with the situation well; a lot of people were displeased about the shelter situation; and a lot of people were displeased about the general housing., who got houses, people who got assistance from government and who didn't get, and so on. And of course there was another point of view where people were angry because people were not cooperating. You know, that a lot of people were depending a lot on the government and doing nothing for themselves. And there was another aspect. A set were saying 'let's all work together and get on with it,' saying to the people let's get straight to work instead of a lot of complaining, you know.

* You challenge me because in that same song you ask if things would be different if it happened a second time around, something to that effect?

* Hmm hmm. Now that we know, I was saying, if the people who dies if they'd still take that decision again. I was trying to suggest that they would. they loved their country that much.

* No greater love has anyone. I see you make some connection here.

A1: (laughing) That's in the bible. Well I think there's a scripture in the Bible that says "no greater love hath any man than a man lay down his life.

* That's a reference to?

A1: That's saying that the people who died, they made a sacrifice. They lay down their lives. So it was like they were demonstrating that sort of love that Montserratians have for their country.

* OK. Earlier on, you talked about sources of discontent. You said that people didn't think they were being treated fairly from externally and you touched on the

British. I notice you ask in one of your songs: Have you noticed the British never acting? Can you unpack that for me?

A1: OK. I was saying that- well, the literal sense is that at the time there were a lot of acting positions. A lot of the senior civil servants were acting. I guess it was a result, too, of people leaving their substantive posts, going away and that sort of thing. However, there was a British Police Commissioner, for example, and a few other British, and they weren't acting. That's the obvious part. 'The British never act' was saying really, they meant exactly what they said. If there's a disagreement between the local government and the British government, the British would have their way.

*: OK. SO is it both a statement about the British and the local or is it more a statement on the British position?

A1: It was more a statement on the British position. I was basically saying the British meant exactly what they say, and they have their way.

*: So it's not exactly a favourable comment?

A1: Ahm. (*pause*) It's not a favourable comment in that sometimes the British try to portray that they are working in harmony, and they are willing to compromise, and all that, but really, they don't.

* Notwithstanding this, you speak of the package. Darling leh we go home,

A1: (*laughing*) Yea. It started 'Darling leh we go home' because at the time, what was really happening was that Montserratians who had left Montserrat not as a result of the volcanic crisis - they were living outside Montserrat. Now during the volcanic crisis the package- the British offering to take people to England and remain there at British expense, this was extended to countries in the region, people who had been outside Montserrat long before the crisis, were coming back home, sort of re-establishing their Montserratian-ness and getting the package and going to England. And so somebody is saying 'darling leh we go home because I hear they giving the package. If we go home, we can get to go to England. That was where the 'darling leh we go home' came from.

* Yes. In that song Darling leh we go home, back home to Montserrat. Mi navel string bury there; everybody know that. Can you say a little bit about that.

A1: 'Navel string bury here' means that I was born there. Well mi navel string buried in Montserrat, so I was born here.

* Do you know where that comes from, this whole thing about navel string?

A1: Navel string bury here? It's an old saying. I'm not sure exactly where it comes from. But it basically means that you are from that country. I guess if you're born whatever, they would cut your navel string and bury it.

* Yea. At home we bury it- when I say at home I mean in Dominica-

Q: Yes, Dominica.

* We'd bury it under a tree. I think it's an African custom.

A1: OK. Right

* They people say here [in the song] I hear England nice, I hear England sweet, Montserratians rejoice.

A1: (*laughing*) Well, there were people going up there and the story says they got benefits. Some of them enjoyed not having to work. They hang out and they would get a few pounds. I don't know how much it is. When I wrote that song I said 50 pounds a week, Montserratians rejoice. So it was just saying that the people were enjoying England. A lot of the young people went there and got apartments for them and their children. They just hang out and they got their money. Not something to be encouraged, but it was putting a little humour in the song, really.

* You think that deep down there is that love for England?

A1: Not for everybody. Not for everybody. Some, up to now, I was there, I hear some people say that they not coming back to Montserrat.

* The other song I want to ask you about is *Eruption of Corruption*.

A1: Eruption- of course of the volcano. It was the initial stages of the eruption of the volcano, hence the word eruption, but at the same time there were some people doing some things that were not really good. For example, I think I alluded to some people who were living in people's homes, very inconsiderate in terms of using their resources, their abusing their electricity, water, telephone, that sort of thing. There were people living in the shelters, for example. I think that they went home with the government cots. When they got a chance to go back home, they would take things from the shelter and take them back to their homes. I think whatever I said that was corruption there. I think also, that politicians sort of used the situation to gain popularity, especially the politicians who were not in the hot seat, the opposition politicians. It was a time when a lot of people were in shelters. They were living close to each other, jammed up in shelters. They were sort of bringing food for them every day and that sort of thing, not quite the kind of life but it was a situation that nobody had anticipated; and I think that the politicians were exploiting the situation. they were misleading the people because if you're telling the people, for example, that you're living in a shelter, you should not be living there because the government should be providing a nice spacious house for you, then if you hang on to that? Well, of course, some of us would know that it wasn't practical and I also alluded to that as one form of corruption. What else did I..?

* As you say, you were talking about people being inconsiderate, unfeeling... As you say, these are some of the things that were not good. I guess you're making a judgement here, a moral judgement on the situation.

A1: Yes. Well yes.

* Then maybe you would have noticed some things that were good too. Did you?

A1: In *Eruption of Corruption*?

* Well not necessarily in that song, but in the whole setting of-

A1: Yes. Yes, of course. Of course. One of the obvious things that was good is that it brought out creativity. I can start with me. I began thinking deeper. I believe I have written better songs since the crisis than before the crisis. And not only me. I mean you've heard a lot of very good songs from people like Randy Greenaway. Some of the calypsonians have written some really good songs both hear in Montserrat and overseas based writers. What else good came out it? Well it's the obvious thing and we're probably sort of tired of hearing the word resilience, but it brought out the resilience of the people. It was very heartening to know, first of all, that people were prepared to stay here in Montserrat in spite of the fact that they were offered the package. So, one of the good things about Montserrat is that

everybody who is living here actually chose to live here, made a - had it not been for the crisis, you born in Montserrat, and you'd just continue living in Montserrat. You didn't have to make a decision; it's just here you live. Now we were put in a situation where we had to decide whether we're going to live in Montserrat; and I think Montserrat is probably the only country where everybody who live in Montserrat actually chose, made a conscious decision that they want to , that they gonna live in Montserrat. There were other good things but I -

* You did sing *Is the Crisis We Face*

A1: Aha. that go make us stronger, ..go bring us together ...

* Do you think it has brought us together?

A1: (*laughing*) Well in the sense that everybody is living in the north. I don't know. There's still rivalry, which of course, people dealing with people, there's a lot of rivalry. I don't know that it has necessarily brought us together.

* You mentioned some of the pain that people felt in some of your songs. In one of them *One More Montserratian Dead Abroad*

A1: Hmm hmm. I believe that most (*emphasis*) people when they left Montserrat were intending to come back and live in Montserrat. Not all, but most people. Most of them thought that they would come back and live in their own homes, even those from the southern exclusion part of the island. But- I don't have it statistically, but there was a feeling that there was an increase in Montserrat deaths during the height of the crisis, of Montserratians dying, and quite a number of them were dying overseas. the song was saying one more Montserratian has passed away abroad. One more patriot will not return to her shores. That song actually was inspired- I got the inspiration when I went to Antigua to a funeral . The cemetery that I was in, I was actually reading tombstones like I do every time I go into a cemetery, and in there was not a single soul who I knew. I was just saying that the person who was being buried at the time, that they she isn't going to meet anybody under there wherever (*laughing*) that she knows. She was a faithful person in a church, so I think I did

allude to that in the song as well, so I did say like a lot of people, she would already have chosen the spot that she'd be buried in Montserrat; but she wasn't buried there.

* Do you have relatives who died abroad because of the relocation?

A1: No close relatives. Very good friends but no close relatives.

* Where were they?

A1: The person I went to Antigua for the funeral, she was my landlady at one time, my neighbour at one time, I taught her grandchildren, and she was a member of my church.

* Have you lost family members through the relocation? I mean lost in the sense that they don't live here anymore because of the eruption?

A1: I tell you what. I think it was 1997 when we had the big exodus. I remember my phone had not rang for about two days and then I realised that nobody would have called me from Montserrat at all! it was like getting a totally new circle of friends at the time. Yes, my mother is in England. My two sisters are in England; one went before the crisis. I also have a brother in England and loads and loads of friends.

J*: Quite an experience. Now you just might have something else you want to share.

A1: I see a lot of hope for Montserrat. I believe a lot of good can come out of this crisis, like I say, there's greater spiritual awareness. I believe that's something we can capitalise on. There's a lot of cultural awareness. I did say that people are writing better now. I think one of the obvious benefits - things like caring for the elderly came to the forefront during the crisis, the coming into being of homes for the elderly and courses showing people how to, whether is nurses or if you just want to do it for your own education. I think those are some of the benefits. Personally, right now I'm coordinator of culture. I have a lot of programmes, music programmes. It's a delight to see little children playing just about every musical instrument. The other thing is that had it not been for the crisis, I'm not saying I wouldn't have gotten this job, but maybe I would have had more competition (*big laugh*).

* (*laughing*). You probably would have won the competition all the same.

A1: Right. I'm anxious to make my contribution to make Montserrat comfortable. I would like while we're dealing with infrastructure, building of homes and yes, that's important, but I would like to see us pay attention to things like the arts and so on. We have to enjoy our life as well because it's the only one we'll have. So basically, I'm optimistic about the future of Montserrat. Not everybody will return but I know a lot of people will return if we do what's necessary to encourage people to return. And basically that's it.

* Yea. Thank you very much.

A1: You're very welcome.

5B. Interview with A5 (artist #5) April 13, 2004

* Morning A.

A5: Good morning J

* Thanks for seeing me again. I might have mentioned this time I'm doing research about pastoral care in disaster

A5: hmm hmm

*: But this time basing the thesis on the reflection of Montserrat residents and their experiences of care in disaster. Now in preparing for this research here, I looked at some of your music. Congratulations again. I have used your recordings as being sort of representative of the people. So I need to be clear- I have my interpretations, no doubt.

A5: Right

* I want to be sure that I'm reading you correctly.

A5: OK. Which particular one you-

* Well there are some songs, a number of them, but there's one *Have a Little Faith*. I know you didn't write the original

* Right

* but you did re-record it and I think you added to it.

A5: I added and made some changes in it to make it more current at the time.

* Because Reality had written that in the wake of Hurricane Hugo

A5: Correct

* And you sang it after the Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn, and in the context of the volcanic eruptions.

A5: Right.

* OK. Having faith. I notice that there were, if I may say, social and political connotations to having faith.

A5: Right

* Was that deliberate?

A5: It was deliberate. Because you have faith, yes. You have faith in the most almighty being, the Lord, but then, especially in small countries, sometimes we have to have another faith in.. the politicians who are there to make important decisions for us especially in times of crisis. And it is difficult to please everybody all the time as you know; you're a preacher yourself. But it's just that sometimes because of biasness or selfishness or driven by supporter support, they tend to not sometimes the spread the aid freely throughout. I mean a good case in point would have been the *Galvanise* song that my brother did some years ago as to *Where de galvanise?* I think as a composer and as a Caribbean entertainer, where people are always concerned about being outspoken and being critical of what goes on in the society they in, because of whatever repercussions there might be, a lot of people tend to

look up to the voice of the entertainer to sent the message out, whether subtle or implied or in whatever way.

* So you think that people expect you as an entertainer to do something, to do education? Because I was going to say (maybe I'm wrong) that I look at somebody like Zunky, for instance, as recording stuff without so much a view to entertaining. But you are first and foremost an entertainer.

A5: Correct. Correct.

*: Yet you don't just entertain. OK, you have hits like *Hot, hot, hot* and yet it seems to me that you are always taken up with what's going on.

A5: Oh yes. Definitely. I'm a lot since having gone through Hugo because before Hugo came, we used to look at Hurricane as a picnic. Everytime you bar up and then the hurricane never came. And only after going through Hugo and understanding how dangerous and frightening a hurricane be and what it can do, it change the whole outlook on life. And then after Hugo we went through the volcano. We still going through the volcano. **It kind of tend to make you go a little deeper and sometimes you feel you have a responsibility then to give hope, to give faith, and to stabilize the community in which you live. At least mentally.**

* OK. So you were actually trying to stimulate hope.

A5: **Yes. Definitely.**

*: And faith?

A5: **Yes, and to keep it alive too.**

JDM: I wondered with you singing I say to the survivors: have a little faith..in times a wound shall mend. OK. These are not your words. But I think you inserted things like you gotta stay in the shelter... you gotta like the food...*What does staying in the shelter really have to do with faith?*

A5: **Because they were so much talk and criticism about shelter life, where people were saying they doh like this, they doh like that. I mean at that time we were in a critical situation. We thrown upon a volcano and we had to deal with it there and then. We had to learn to go through the rough times and the better times will come behind. Because there you had cooks providing nourishment for people there. And is true that being a small community, the accommodation sometimes is not perfect, but at least it liveable, especially when you compare with different things happening in other parts of the world, and what you see.**

*: You said it's all part of the struggle.

A: Yes.

* Well you actually used the word struggle and another thing you say: Love your neighbour. Where does this come in?

A: **Well the fact is that particularly since the volcano, Montserrat has come on to be really like one family. to be living with a shelter or wherever you were living, people actually took you into their homes. Under normal conditions you would not have done that. You live in strength and the more we could get along with our neighbour we could move ahead collectively, rather than individually.**

* So you say those who suffer natural disaster have a little faith, even economic disaster, have a little faith.

A5: Yea, because especially we went through major economic disaster in Montserrat. When you look at some of the people who had no insurance, don't have the strength or the money to rebuild. Even though you get grants, the grants really can't take you to full completion. So a lot of things went on real bad. **I keep saying that we being a British colony, that the British government should have had some way where they could have given us options**

* But you weren't only singing about the British. I read a line here: if insurance don't pay you.

A: Yea, because there's so much of horror insurance stories de fine print and de dis and de dat. A lot of people underinsured or overinsured, so by the time they do the arithmetic, what they thought they would get they didn't get. It really hit a lot of people hard.

JDM: But you as a businessman yourself would have seen the insurers point of view.

A5: well yes. Is just that, you know sometimes unless things happen and people don't have the full information as far as that goes. Because a lot of people would have purposely either overinsured or underinsured their property, not knowing when it comes to claiming, when they work the figures out you lose, whichever way you go. So you know people say ignorance is no excuse for the law, but some people don't have the opportunity to learn. They will never even reach there.

JDM: So you saw the whole experience as a learning experience.

A5: Oh yea. That's definite.

* Some people say the volcano is a blessing in disguise. Some others say it's a curse. What's your take on that?

A5: Well, that's a hard question. We could look at it 2 ways. Blessing in disguise because it kind of teaches us that good fortune is only temporary and that Mother nature could strike and take away anything at any time. And it maybe take a lot of people closer to God in that, you know that in times like these especially natural disasters, you have to try and live as pure a life as you can. . As to the curse aspect of it, a lot of people feel and say with or without a volcano you find that lots of people feel that Montserratian is not together, [as] a country ,for instance, they don't support their own enough, they don't encourage people forward. They tend to look at success in a grudging way and not use success of a person or thing as a yardstick for them to aspire towards that also. And it goes back to when ... people say the days of Oliver Cromwell and things like that you know. But I mean it's ... I'm not an expert on that!

* But that;s something you sang about the '*grudge*'.

A5: Right. Right.

* What fascinates me in all my meetings and interviews, the whole idea of Montserratian being a closely knit community comes up. You raised that idea already. And then on the other hand, people mention the '*grudge*' bit. Do you think this is really a Montserratian feature or is just a human feature.

A5: I think.. I think.. it is a human feature because since the days of Cain and Abel there was always grudge and evil, but Montserrat seems to be the capital of the world when it comes to that. Whether because is such a small society so it tends to project itself more. That might be the reason for it, but it is a Montserrat problem

that they need to start to work on generation from generation on it. You find that even in the schools system a child may go home, young child 7, 8 years, and say: look, I came first. And the other parent will say: oh is because a dis child, the teacher mus be do dis. A teacher do dis. Nobody ever look at the real success and compliment it. They look on all the negatives.

* We have a problem dealing with success when it's not our own.

A5: Correct. Correct. That is a problem. And it's promoted. It is always promoted. We don't want it to be advertised as a Montserrat ting but it's something that we need to work on. We tend to see all the negatives and never see the positives. You understand?

* So how is it we say that Montserratians are resilient? Rather, people have come in and referred to the resilience.

A5: Well we are very resilient because to be honest, to go through what we have gone through, especially in this situation, especially with the fact that people feel nobody should be living on Montserrat. We take the chance. We go through all the problems, and we still forge ahead. We definitely (*strong emphasis*) resilient. Without a doubt. Lots of others would just haul and go!

* That brings me to your song *I Just Can't Run Away*. Was that a message for those who were leaving or about who were staying?

A5: I think is more ... is for both those who were saying and those who were leaving. From the point of view was that everybody was just leaving helter skelter without giving it any thought. And I feel I needed to educate them. Hey look, regardless to what going on here, this is still a great place; and you don't know what you're going to meet in the outside world. They had to look at that aspect with a little more scrutiny. So I still feel that with the right help we could still be comfortable in our small area in Montserrat.

* Well no doubt you acknowledge the intensity of the troubles the people had. I remember *One Day At a Time*. You captured the dilemma- having to relocate, things happening in the night, people full of fright... How much of that was just representing other people? How much of it was like, your own situation?

A5: Well I lived through a lot of that because at that time I was down in Lim Kiln and the sirens used to come on almost every 8 or ten hours. Everybody decide they just going to drive, drive over to the north, go back, that kind of thing. We just.. in the early stages... I must say that now almost everybody in Montserrat is a volcanologist .because we've gone through all the ups and downs with the volcano. So we know exactly when to expect real danger, and so on. But at that time, in the embryonic part of the volcano, we just weren't so sure; and we think back bout Guadeloupe [*wrong island- he's talking about Martinique- St. Pierre, 1902*] where one person survive and poisonous gas, and did kinda ting. I only fully respected the volcano after the people died up in the east. You know what I mean? Because then you realised how fast pyroclastic flows can be. Because we all thought pyroclastic flows , you could get out of the way, and you could do this, and you would have time. So a lot of *One Day at a Time* was experience I lived through and what a lot of other people lived through.

* Do you think that can help other people to live through?

A5: Oh yes. Definitely. I think they could look at what we went through here and take it as an example to survive in whatever problems they may have. Not just here but in any part of the world.

* Do you think that the music that came out in this period could be helpful to people elsewhere?

A5: Oh yes. Definitely. Definitely. Our experiences were real. And when you even look at this thing. Is true not a lot of people died, look at it from the ratio and the percentage, people may say :look , they had a earthquake in K and thousands of people die. But look at the population and compare it with us.

* Well you have done a lot of travelling abroad. I know you mentioned some undesirable aspects of the local culture. As you survey the situation in the countries where you've been, what would you say are the features of Montserratian culture, you sang about *Montserrat Culture*, made it easier- well you did mention the good part- made it easier for the community to survive?

A5: You mean aspects of the culture through all this thing?

* Yes.

A5: I would say is the - I don't know if you could call culture love- but *I think the love of country and the way we live, as far as the freedom-* you don't have to lock up, you know? You feel free. Is like the travelling all over the world, I feel like I could just come back to Montserrat for just two or three days. You feel inspired. You in a big country you always looking over you shoulder. You feel things could happen at any time. I feel things like those you can't trade it for anything in the world.

* You said love of country. That would explain your writing things like we can rise up from the rubble... your country needs you most..? there is that element of it you want to call it patriotism.

A: Right. Right. Definitely. You got it right. Definitely

*. Now I could ask more but I will not impose any more.

A5: So when you going complete your studies?

JDM: I have at least 18 months more.

A5: Research or back at university?

* Well it's analysing all the data I have. I've done background reading but there's always more reading one can do. So I've got to see what new comes out of the reading and other data.

Before I leave, let me ask: any lessons? I mean I asked what I wanted to find out about. But maybe you have something to share that I didn't ask about?

A5: You mean lessons I learnt from all this?

Well the major lesson which I mentioned earlier is that Mother Nature and the Lord controls a lot of things. As much plans as you could make, there's an almighty being that makes decisions and we have to go with his decisions. And I think that some people will say that it depends on the guy on the mountain. I think it goes further than that. It depends on the trials the Lord may want to put us through, whether to test out strength or to make us stronger people, whatever. And the other major lesson is that one can survive on the basics of life. Because lots of people lives have

changed since the volcano, and they still survive. And I'm saying you just have to adjust to the situation. You may have to do without a couple things you were accustomed to.

* Can I add, for the record, that you're speaking as somebody of considerable means? Cause somebody listening to the interview may think OK you're speaking as somebody who hasn't been accustomed to much.

A5: No. I realise in my travels I've rubbed shoulders with kings- the King in Morocco. I've been throughout Africa touring as a musician. So I am compatible to live in almost any society and could survive almost in anything. I could go to the basics I mean, It's hard to live in a shelter. I can do that, based on my different experiences. So I think it's more than just somebody who's accustomed to more and now have to live with less.

* OK.

A5: I think it's just a general lesson, that proportionately, however you put it, you have to make the adjustment.

* OK. I notice you threw this thing on the Lord and said 'whatever the Lord is doing to test ... You don't have a problem seeing the Lord as ultimately responsible? It doesn't trouble your faith one way or the other.

A5: Definitely not . Because the Lord did not have to go through what he went through on the cross. He could have eliminated it, I mean. So I think that is a lesson in itself to tell people that certain things you have to go through and you have to live. you know, I'm not vexed with the Lord, or anything of the sort, the way some people may feel that the Lord not looking after them. I don't look at it that way at all.

JDM: Thank you very much.

A5: If you think of anything else, just let me know.

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PASTORAL CARE IN DISASTER: A Theological Reflection

Introduction

1. The Context of the Thesis

This research presents practical, intellectual inquiry into three interrelated theological concerns.

Firstly, there is the classic theological problem of human suffering such as was encountered during the eruptions of the Soufrière Hills Volcano on Montserrat. A practical and constructive approach to the problem, which focuses on its religious and political implications, is selected for the investigation in favour of a theoretical, theistic apologetic, the latter being characteristic of traditional theological response to the problem of evil and suffering.¹ Contemporary theological thought recognises that ‘former ways of thinking about God ...have not provided the resources we need to address our corporate and embodied life in the world.’² This observation strengthens the argument in favour of approaches to theological reflection that emphasise issues of human relationship, agency, and embodiment such as are emphasised in this research.³

Secondly, the situation of volcanic disaster revealed the inadequacy of existing religious traditions on Montserrat to cope with the reality of evil and suffering as experienced there. This judgement derives both from the reflections of the researcher who served as a Methodist pastor in the context and from the views of several research participants whose involvement both validated the inquiry and contributed to the outcomes. This is not to suggest that persons directly and unambiguously articulated their understanding of what constituted successful pastoral strategies for coping with the suffering they had lived through. Rather, their varied expressions through speech, music, art, movement, drama and song suggested their “dis-ease” with pastoral care as they experienced it then and also indicated possibilities for revising pastoral practices in similar contexts. It is through exploration of these

¹ Felderhoff, M., 2004, “Evil: theodicy or resistance?” *Scottish Journal of Theology Ltd.*, 57,4, p. 397

² Dyrness, W. A., 1997, *The Earth is God’s: A Theology of American Culture*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, p.xi

³ *ibid.*, p.xii

statements, sentiments and gestures that the thesis will build a discussion concerning people's understanding of what constitutes acceptable pastoral care. If indeed practical theology is about 'listening to, discerning, affirming, nurturing people where they are at both collectively and individually,' then attempts at building up knowledge must take seriously their expressions of concern.⁴

Thirdly, there was the related failure of classical Western theological training for ministry in the particular Caribbean context. Just as the problems related to the natural phenomenon of an erupting volcano were complicated by historical, social and political factors, so too did the weaknesses in inherited models of Christian pastoral care present considerable challenge at a time of heightened demand for the churches to offer consolation in the face of natural disaster.

The obvious need for clearer articulation of theology for the ministry of pastoral care and counselling has been repeatedly emphasised in pastoral care literature of the last thirty years. Hunter observed that 'the real crisis in pastoral care is in its inadequate theoretical base.'⁵ One result of this is a lack of clergy understanding of and even interest in the laity's perception and understanding of pastoral praxis as they experience it in the church. Contemporary writers therefore support both a re-consideration of the theoretical bases of pastoral care and a re-evaluation of current pastoral practices. This necessitates clarification of the laity's expectations and evaluations regarding these practices. Since people usually refrain from telling ministers what they really think, they need encouragement to do so. This research therefore seeks to access such information through the cooperative effort of its participants.

2. Addressing the Problem

For the researcher, located at the intersection of the three concerns stated above, this need took on special significance. Living and serving in the face of a sudden disaster, an experience that turned out to be a protracted one, and seeking to utilise the recommended models for pastoral care and counselling, this pastor suspected that there were inherent weaknesses in those models. Her continuing reflections both

⁴ Storrar, W., 2005, "What will you do with all the walls?" Theology and Ethics Seminar, Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Edinburgh.

⁵ Hunter, R. J., 1990, Editorial, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville, Abingdon

within the context of disaster and during subsequent evaluation suggested that the models for pastoral care were based on inadequate theories, and not the most helpful in the situation. Needing a conceptually and practically more relevant pastoral theology for ministry in the given context, the researcher was driven towards engagement in a more structured theological reflection which is the essence of this study.

It seeks to offer to pastoral caregivers and counsellors, and particularly those serving Caribbean communities facing disaster, pastoral theological perspectives overlooked in contemporary pastoral care theory. These perspectives are defined on the basis of the researcher's reflections on the theological reflections of residents concerning the exercise of pastoral care in Montserrat during the volcanic eruptions which began in 1995. She uses an anthropological approach rather than quantitative study methods to probe people's concerns and to access their reflections. Their theological reflections are a collaborative effort, guided by a critical application of Groome's theological method of *shared Christian praxis* with the researcher providing leadership throughout the process.

Through this inquiry into concrete situations of pastoral care delivery, the study highlights an observable non-coherence between the practice of pastoral care and the theological principles on which the ministry of care is based. The aim of the research is not immediately to reconcile the obvious differences but rather to glean the spaces they expose and to grasp the learning this opportunity offers with a view to determining appropriate corrective measures. This exploration of the spaces between expounded theory and actual practice of pastoral care does yield resources to explain the discrepancies and to suggest alternate approaches to care.

The investigation yields a positive response to Barnes' appeal for the utilisation of traditional wisdom in the search for culturally appropriate models of care and counselling, and for providing care in disaster. Her study of meaning in the Montserrat volcanic disaster, which has identified largely theological interpretations of the experience, prescribes further research 'regarding the relationship between religious beliefs, meaning, effects and coping.'⁶

⁶ Barnes, V., 2000, "The Montserrat Volcanic Disaster: A study of meaning, psycho-social effects, coping and intervention", PhD dissertation, University of Birmingham, p. 385

Using culturally sensitive methods to explore what Barnes refers to as ‘traditional wisdom’, this search for a pastoral theology based in the community’s reflections on its experiences of living, working and caring in conditions of disaster represents one step towards accessing and appropriating the gift of knowledge it has received.⁷ As will become clear, the research outcomes can move forward the process for a praxis oriented approach to pastoral care that transforms persons and communities. Indeed,

pastoral theology is not knowledge for its own sake but transformational knowledge and process that makes some kind of difference in reality.⁸

This potential to creatively influence alternate ways of living is important. There is much benefit to be derived from reflection on pastoral practice, from the initial efforts at helping victims cope with their fears to later interventions intended to encourage the communal survival of “hope-full” persons. But an individual personal reflection will not suffice.

...good fieldwork is not something performed by an isolated intellectual or researcher but something created by all of the people in the social situation being studied⁹

⁷ In this research *a community* refers to a group of persons, often sharing a common geographical location, but so described because a sense of solidarity, mutuality, shared values and common history exists among them. Sometimes, the population of Montserrat as a whole is regarded as *a community* because in the context of disaster, they are corporately vulnerable. They suffer and / or survive together. Within Montserrat, there are different *communities* such as churches with members sharing a common faith, church organizations with persons having common interests, and *community groups* such as men’s/ women’s/ youth groups with members of each sharing a connectedness in solidarity and mutuality. References are also made to the *scientific community* since a bond connected these professionals working together in volcanic monitoring and in being a collective target for specific concerns. While *a community* is usually identified on the basis of commonalities, its members are individually different.

Community as an ideal emphasizes the same principles of solidarity and mutuality, places value on relationship and inclusiveness, and balances individual and corporate personal needs and responsibilities. This study takes a Christian view of *community* which implies the maintenance of harmony and a commitment to expressing the will of a universally loving God whose creation is diverse. Informed by current ecological concern, *community* in the broadest sense extends the terms of dynamic interdependence to include all creation.

See Orchard, S., 1988, “Community” in *Crucible*, July – September 1988, p.106-13

⁸ Pattison, S., 1994, “A Vision of Pastoral Theology: In search of words that resurrect the dead” A Contact Pastoral Monograph. No. 4, Edinburgh, p. 4

The content of this pastoral monograph is included in the author’s 2003 revision of Pattison, S., 1988, *A Critique of Pastoral Care*, London: SCM Press

⁹ Wax, R., 1971, *Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 363

The commitment to Montserrat as a community underlying the development of this thesis discourages its becoming the type of researcher's monologue reminiscent of one genre of western anthropological studies that research subjects have found detestable. The voice of persons in the suffering, surviving, hoping community will be heard. Their participation is vital to making explicit much tacit knowledge that can inform the delivery of pastoral care that is both theologically valid and contextually relevant.

3. Montserrat: Background to the Volcanic Eruptions

In order to clarify the research problem in its context, this section gives a description of the historic background to the Montserrat volcanic disaster and of some of the events resulting in the human crisis evoked by the eruptions. Since the island's colonial status was often cited as complicating several aspects of that crisis, this political element has to be included. It is important that pastoral care takes account of social and political forces that contribute to human distress.¹⁰

Geo-scientific matters

Montserrat is a 39.5 square mile island situated in the Lesser Antilles (Figure 1), a volcanic island arc formed at the junction of the Atlantic and Caribbean tectonic plates. Like its neighbours, the island lies in the path of Atlantic hurricanes that develop from hot air currents travelling westward from the Sahara Desert.

¹⁰ Pattison, *Critique*, op. cit., especially Ch. 5

Poling, J., 1991, *The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem*, Nashville: Abingdon, p.31



Figure 1: Map of Eastern Caribbean Showing the Lesser Antilles

Source: Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Barbados

Montserrat Volcano Risk Map

September 1997

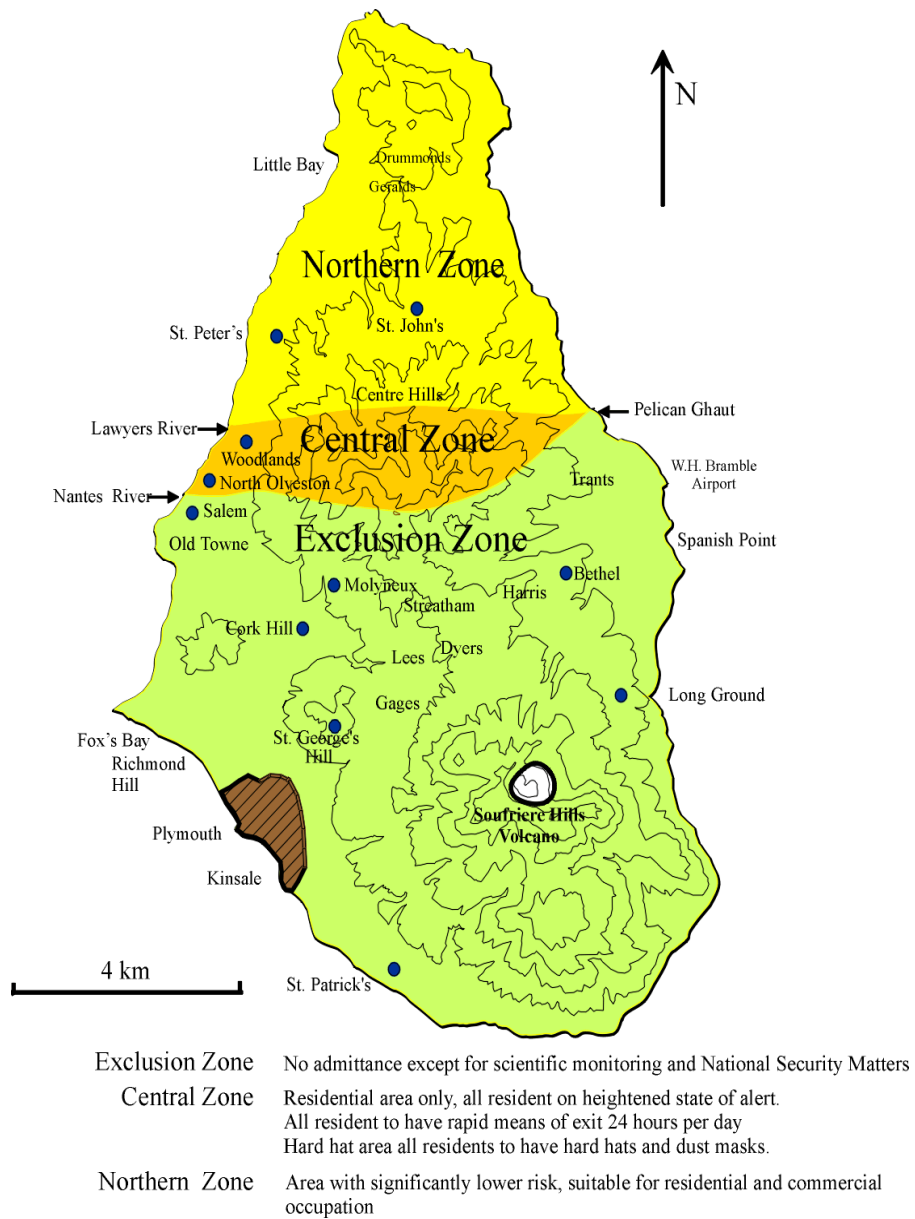


Figure 2: Map of Montserrat showing location of volcano

Source: Montserrat Volcano Observatory

Hurricanes and volcanic activity, then, have long been features of the island. However, unlike twentieth century hurricanes, the fiercest of which wreaked havoc there in 1924, 1928, and 1989, and whose destructive effects are remembered by many, the last significant volcanic eruption occurred centuries ago and had no place in the cultural memory of Montserrat. Whereas folk tales in more southerly Caribbean islands with more recent violent eruptions warn of the associated dangers, for Montserrat this theme was captured only by creative writers such as Montserratian born novelist M.P Shiel who, in 1901, noted the island's proneness to disaster, and E.A. Markham who, after the 1989 hurricane, predicted 'the day Soufrière vomit corruption back in we face.'¹¹

Notwithstanding the existence of a detailed record of recent volcanic activity in the Lesser Antilles, including documentation of several associated earthquake crises and fumarolic activity on Montserrat during the last hundred years, ignorance concerning the Soufrière Hills Volcano prevailed.¹² There had been the well published eruption of Mt. Pélée in Martinique in May 1902, a catastrophe that took 29,000 human lives. More recently volcanic events occurred in neighbouring Guadeloupe in 1976 and in St. Vincent in 1979. Not even Jimmy Muffet's 1979 release *Volcano*, recorded at Air Studios, Montserrat, provoked local interest. When, after a three year period of

¹¹ Fergus, H., 2001, *Montserrat in the Twentieth Century: Trials and Triumphs*, Manjack, Montserrat: UWI School of Continuing Studies, p. 131-2, citing 19th century novelist. M.P. Shiel in "About Myself" wrote"

I was born at the moment of an earthquake and a storm, or, rather, these were born at the moment of me... The little island (it is called Montserrat) is a very great and holy place, full of passionate woes, the very apex and hub, as it seems to me, of the world. God cannot let it be, but is ever at it, it would appear, to destroy it: indeed it is foredoomed, like Delos (birthplace of Apollo!) sooner or later to disappear. I have an idea that at the moment of my death it will sink...my eyes have filled with love and pity for it, and all its turbulent epilepsies, and its despondent manias, and wayward Orestian frenzies, and coming doom. It has souffraires (hot sulphur-springs), and sometimes, after one of its tantrums, passing invisible ships many a mile out at sea can smell that fume of Hell that it sends.

Markham, E., 1990, "Here We Go Again", p. 82, in Fergus, H., Ed., *Horrors of a Hurricane*, Plymouth, Montserrat: UWI School of Continuing Studies

¹² Howard, R., 1962, "Volcanism and Vegetation in the Lesser Antilles," *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum*, xliii- 3, p.280, citing the chronology prepared by Perret, F. A. in "The volcano-seismic crisis at Montserrat, 1933-37", Carnegie Institute, Washington, Pub. 512.

Interest in the island's *soufrières* began since 1810 with the visit of Dr. N. Nugent

See also Montserrat Volcano Observatory (MVO) Website www.mvo.gov.ms

precursor seismic activity, the current volcanic eruptions started, residents of Montserrat were caught by surprise.¹³

Politics and governance

Both real practical implications and perceived encumbrances related to the island's colonial status were significant stressors during the eruptions. Tensions between the local government and Her Majesty's Government (HMG) in the UK, "Brit-bashing" on the part of locals, unfair criticisms of the expatriate scientific community and stated suspicions of a British intent to depopulate Montserrat are outcomes of historically traumatic relations.

Many would prefer not to align themselves on either side of a long-standing "cold war", but in reality the volcanic eruptions started during an era marked by local suspicion of imperial politics. Illustrative statements are given from two respected local leaders concerning the externally constructed and hastily enacted constitution of 1989. While the second is known to be openly critical of HMG policy, the first is viewed as being complacent in this regard. This leader judged: 'both the manner of formulating this constitution and its contents constituted a travesty of democracy.'¹⁴

The other commented:

In 1989, this principle [of democracy] was ignored, and our colonial masters swung a weapon at the people of Montserrat, our new constitution, a double-edged sword, which purported to protect the rights of our people, while at the same time subjugating them to the rule and control of their master.¹⁵

Even after British correctives amending the proposal to invest the Governor with legislative authority, the crown's representative continued, strategically, to hold the place of priority over a locally elected government. In fact, the Montserrat Constitutional Review Commission reporting in 2003 made the case for 'allowance for political growth and maturity on the local scene.' In its view, 'the "reserved

¹³ Young, S., Sparks, R., et. al., "Overview of the eruption of the Soufrière Hills volcano, Montserrat, 18 July 1995 to December 1997, in *Geophysical Research Letters*, 25, 18, American Geophysical Union, p. 3389

¹⁴ Fergus, H., *Twentieth Century*, op. cit., p.17

¹⁵ Lewis, L., 1995, *The Montserrat Constitution Order 1989: Fight for the Constitution of Montserrat*, Montserrat: Lowell Lewis, p.5

powers” of the Governor should not be regarded as the only means of providing checks and balances.’¹⁶

While the Governor and the government headed by the Chief Minister held responsibility for the governance of Montserrat in tandem, the constitutional power imbalance between the two provided justifiable cause for concern, and would serve as a ready target for the predictable emotions of anger whether or not these had their origins in political circumstances.

Caribbean culture of dependency

Montserrat’s status as a British overseas territory does not preclude membership in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), a federation that provides social and political support but lacks the financial means to give the economic assistance needed. As part of its response to the Montserrat volcanic disaster, for example, CARICOM gave thirty permanent hurricane proof houses to be built on land purchased and developed through British funding.¹⁷ For the general population, the twin access to UK citizenship, ratified in 2002, and participation in Caribbean politics is attractive. This, like the combination of UK derived and locally designed government policies, supports the enigma of postcolonial dependency, a condition further complicated by the recent calamities beyond human control.

A “dependency syndrome” has been identified among the spiritual and psychological consequences of the history of slavery, colonialism, and “missionary Christianity”.¹⁸

The plantation has also bred a dependent mentality, a tendency to submissiveness, and an acute susceptibility to exploitation...The overall consequence of years of plantation culture is an enduring state of instability, unpredictability, and social and economic fragility.¹⁹

Montserrat had attempted to grow out of dependency. With successful management of post- Hurricane Hugo financial support, it reported a positive outlook for sustainable development by July 1995. But the ensuing natural disaster would soon

¹⁶ Fergus, H., Daley, F., et. al., *Montserrat Report of the Constitutional Commissioners 2002*, presented to H. E. Mr. Anthony Longrigg, January 2003, Montserrat.

¹⁷ Clay, E., Barrow, C., et. al., 1999, *An Evaluation of HMG’s Response to the Montserrat Volcanic Emergency. Volume I*, London: DFID, p. 35

¹⁸ The term “missionary Christianity” is often used by Caribbean theologians to refer to imported mainline theology, especially that of the pre-emancipation and colonial eras.

¹⁹ Smith A., 1991, *Emerging From Innocence*, Mandeville: Eureka press, p. 10-11

curtail commercial activity and result in economic collapse. These events heralded the island's relapse into budgetary dependence on HMG, and a period of mendicancy that militated against the creative involvement of the very persons for whom support programmes were designed.

4. The Volcanic Eruptions

First reactions

The first historic eruption of Soufrière Hills Volcano began on 18th July, 1995.²⁰ Being unaware of the presence of this volcano, people associated disturbing signs such as a persistent roaring noise followed by the sudden dispersal of volcanic ash, and an unusually strong smell of sulphur, with one of the smaller soufrières on the island. The onset of volcanic activity was announced locally but the reaction of friends and relatives abroad was less sober than that of residents on island. Some locals found reason to panic when they first heard the news via overseas telephone calls.

In August, increased volcanic activity produced phreatic eruptions of steam and ash. There were also mudflows into the river valleys leading from the now publicized volcano in English Crater in the Soufrière Hills. Additionally, numerous earth tremors were recorded. While scientists had advised persons to expect such events, specific eruptive activities were unpredictable and the frightening experiences associated with these phenomena could not have been anticipated.

There were mixed reactions to the visual aspects of the eruptions such as ashfalls. Mushrooming columns of darkly coloured ash rose thousands of feet into the air before descending again, on occasion to obliterate the light of day. The first such occurrence on August 21 left many in shock.²¹ However, the physical sensations of earthquakes were, without doubt, the most horrifying. Children, youth and adults reported a sense of helplessness during earth tremors.

²⁰ Young et. al., op. cit., p.3389

Aspinall, W., Loughlin, S., et al, 2002, "The Montserrat Volcano Observatory: its evolution, organization, role and activities", p. 71, in Druitt, T. H. , Kokehar, B. P. Eds., 2002, *The Eruption of Soufrière Hills Volcano, Montserrat, from 1995 to 1999*, Geological Society, London, Memoirs, 21

²¹ *Government in Action*, Vol.2, No.10, November 1995, Office of the Chief Minister, Government of Montserrat, p.2

With the passage of time, people grew familiar with the signs of eruptive activity at the volcano. But as these grew in intensity, in some circles so also did the fear of cataclysmic activity. Rumours and false alarms were so abundant that the added confusion exacerbated the fears of many who simply could not cope.

Disaster management

At the onset of eruptions, a calm, official response included the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and immediate contact with the Seismic Research Unit (SRU) of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA).²² The island's governor, speaking on Radio Montserrat (ZJB Radio), advised persons in affected areas to prepare an overnight bag with emergency food and other supplies just in case this was needed. Institutions were required to put in place evacuations plans to ensure the safe relocation of persons in the event that this became necessary. Residents were, however, encouraged not to panic but rather to await further official advice at home.²³ Most persons tried to follow these instructions, but it was obviously impossible to maintain calm in an atmosphere of uncertainty.

With continuing volcanic activity, volunteers and staff of the emergency services would become the targets of misplaced anger as it was not humanly possible for them to meet all the demands of the emergency situation. Government officials bore blame for unwelcome dietary adjustments as agricultural production fell and some facilities for storage of perishable foods were designated out of bounds. The Police officers who served at check points of entry into the danger zone were regularly abused. Fire, Search and Rescue personnel bore the brunt of responsibility for repeatedly relocating unwilling but vulnerable persons and for continually removing volcanic ash. They also helped with timely rescue of the injured and management of fatalities.

British management personnel appointed by departments of HMG were often confronted by residents who treated them as the inhuman face of HMG. Efforts at disaster management sometimes resulted in the polarisation rather than the

²² Buffonge, C., 1996, *Volcano! A Chronicle of Montserrat's Experience: Book 1*, Plymouth: Montserrat Printery, p.4-8. *Government in Action*, Vol. 2, No. 10, November 1995, Office of the Chief Minister, Government of Montserrat, p.4

²³ ZJB Radio, Governor's press releases July 19 – August 28, 1995.

integration of groups of people. The effect was a weakening of the tremendous human resource potential still present on Montserrat.

Scientific monitoring

From an operational base established by the SRU with help from American and French scientists, the Montserrat Volcano Observatory (MVO) evolved, funded initially by the Government of Montserrat.²⁴ By July 20, 1995, a British naval ship had arrived bringing its helicopter for aerial reconnaissance. On August 8, at the request of the Governor, a scientist from the UK arrived on island. The role of this British scientist was to act as advisor to the Governor and to HMG. Some residents were disturbed by a lack of consensus between American and British / SRU scientists. It is not surprising that subsequently, tensions developed among members of the scientific monitoring team, and between the scientists and residents.

The first evacuations

The initial influx of professionals was encouraging for many. Information from scientists was translated for the population to reassure residents; and official statements were supported by the premise that human safety was a priority.²⁵

Contingency plans were made for a possible evacuation to the neighbouring islands of Guadeloupe and Antigua. For most residents, however, the proposal offering camp style shelter in the neighbouring French island, or “roughing up” in an army base in Antigua, was too distressing to contemplate.²⁶

In their state of increased concern, residents were buffeted with conflicting external media reports and relatives overseas insisting that they evacuate the island. This, coupled with the early departure of medical students from the American University of the Caribbean (AUC) and outbound summer holiday traffic, provoked a wave of emigration.²⁷ From a population of 10,400, 1,200 persons (including students,

²⁴ *Government in Action*, Vol. 2, 10, p.1

²⁵ ZJB Radio, Chief Minister’s press releases July 19 –August 28, 1995

²⁶ “Camp Lightfoot - Montserrat Tent City in Antigua”, *The Montserrat Reporter*, Vol. XI, No. 33, 18th August, 1995, p.1

²⁷ Roache, B., 1995, “We Will Make It”, Editorial, *The Montserrat Reporter*, Vol. XI, 33, p.4,

visitors and residents) had departed by July 26, 1995.²⁸ Many left in haste, and some without even informing close friends and relatives.

Most Montserratians, however, decided to stay put, and the hopeful residents of the south-eastern village of Long Ground prepared to market their latest tourist attraction - the photogenic steam vent that had opened up on Tar River Estate. Their optimism would suffer a severe blow as, before long, a series of brief, precautionary evacuations of the area were announced.²⁹ Villagers experienced the trauma of sudden dislocation of their families and village communities when, for safety reasons, they were moved to the north of the island.

Hurricanes

But earthquakes and volcanic emissions were not the only destructive natural forces to contend with. It was hurricane season as well, and residents were forced to cope with the simultaneous trauma of awaiting an imminent hurricane and an unpredictable volcano. The passage of Hurricane Luis on August 4 and 5 did most damage on Antigua, St. Kitts and St. Thomas, the three islands to which the majority of outbound Montserratians had travelled. In grim fatalism, many returned to Montserrat to face Hurricane Marilyn in September.

Relocations and displacement

The combination of hurricanes and volcanic activity resulted in a late start for the school year. This trend was to continue throughout the crisis years as schools and church buildings in the northern areas housed relocated persons from the south, where the majority had lived. The Long Ground evacuation, referred to earlier, started the first of three series of relocations. People would have to live with constant interruptions to normal routines.

Not only residency, but also communal worship and formal education would be disrupted. Every conceivable social activity from recreation to commerce would be similarly affected. Even convicted prisoners were forced to travel abroad as the prison population changed location to the British territories of the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands. In a situation that necessitated the delivery of

²⁸ Department of Statistics, Government of Montserrat

²⁹ "Stop the Slide", *The Montserrat Reporter*, Vol. XI, No. 31, 4th August 1995, p.1

additional health services, the island's only hospital and all support services were ousted from their newly refurbished base in Plymouth.

The HMG funded Hurricane Hugo recovery programme had resulted in a state-of-the-art New Glendon Hospital that perished beneath volcanic rubble before most of its facilities were ever used. A similar situation obtained for several other infrastructural projects. The most regrettable facet of development planning was the concentration of these in the endangered south. The publicity then given to the previously unheard of Wadge Report fuelled local anger against colonial control.³⁰

But the volcanic crisis was well into its second year before the abandonment of amenities in the south was inevitable. Until April 1997, disaster management procedures involved a series of temporary evacuations, so that residential, commercial, and industrial spaces were reoccupied once the political directorate received scientific advice that it was safe to do so.

The system of shifting operations added to the burden of uncertainty. This was further complicated by highly sensationalised media reporting which gave birth to suspicions that locals were being deliberately misinformed about the gravity of the volcanic situation on Montserrat. It was not unusual, after an exhausting day where one's coping skills were tested to the limits, to be awakened by inquirers from abroad. In fact, well meaning callers from Europe and North America often seemed more intrusive than the noisy volcanic rockfalls which, with unpredictable frequency, punctuated attempts to secure restful sleep.

Locally, the makeshift nature of work and living conditions during evacuations were also significant stressors for the entire population. Until the volcanic eruptions, disaster management provided shelters for refuge from hurricanes. These were

³⁰ Wadge, G., Isaacs, M., 1986, *Volcanic Hazards from Soufrière Hills Volcano, Montserrat, West Indies: A Report to the Government of Montserrat and the Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project*.

The report mapped areas of Montserrat that would be at risk if the volcano erupted. Its predictions concerning the loss of centralized facilities in Plymouth and destruction of most southern areas proved accurate. According to information presented to the International Committee investigating policy and administration in relation to the management of the volcanic crisis, this report was apparently delivered to UNDRO (United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation), the Governor of Montserrat and the Commissioner, Royal Montserrat Police Force.

The Governor on the island at the start of the eruptions indicated that neither he nor the Government in office in 1995 were aware of this report. See *House of Commons Session 1997-98 International Development Committee First Report. Montserrat*, London: The Stationery Office, p.90-91

essentially temporary arrangements as most persons used public shelters for one or two days. The unforeseen volcanic disaster called for long-term purpose built shelters, but none were available until 1996. People occupied cramped spaces which did not afford even minimum privacy. In such conditions, human relations deteriorated and life bordered on the unbearable.

Shelter life was disastrous for families who could no longer continue their preferred systems of home management and family discipline. And since their designation as shelters precluded the use of recreation centres for leisure activities, the population was robbed of the therapeutic value of play. It was also without the private space needed to meet the increasing demand for individual and small group counselling.

Areas previously used for sport were hastily converted to lumber yards, bases for mechanical equipment removed from the south, lots for small removable houses, or even distribution of food and relief supplies. Private residences were also overcrowded as residents from the southern portion of the island moved in with friends and relatives in the north. No sector of the population was spared the need for adjustment to life with new house mates and neighbours, and this at a time when tensions continued to mount due to the escalating problems of housing, employment, education, recreation, and health services.

The need for domestic adjustments was mirrored in public life. Apart from their individual preferences, people's loyalties to their home districts often resulted in conflict. Fortunately the EOC had allocated shelters on a community basis, so shelterees did not meet total strangers. But the unfamiliar would be encountered everywhere. A tendency to divisiveness was very evident as factions refused to work together. Paradoxically, the need to merge proved especially problematic for churches which, ideally, are centres of welcome and consolation in distress.³¹ The fact that this polarisation was so very obvious in churches became a source of great malaise both in church and in the wider society, and the issue was discussed widely.

As volcanic activity escalated and the disaster experience protracted, the burden on human beings and on their relationships would force an alarm for help. The cry issued in various forms, and affected all aspects of life and culture- social, political,

³¹ Evidence from field research is given in Chapter Five where the subject of one theological reflection is "*the challenge of difference*". The church problem is presented in the context of concern in the wider Montserrat community.

economic, as the volcano devastated the capital Plymouth, buried villages, scorched the lands to which they were attached spiritually, killing some twenty persons in the path of pyroclastic flows and surges.³²

The eruptions impacted negatively on the physical environment, rendering unsafe and/or uninhabitable 60% of the land.³³ But the loss of residential, commercial and industrial buildings, the destruction or isolation of productive agricultural lands, the collapse of the economy and the protraction of uncertainty during the eruptions were arguably less distressing than the demographic changes associated with the disaster.

The socio-demographic effects of the eruption have been massive. The country has been fragmented by migration and relocation, and community and household structures have broken down...by late 1997 to early 1998, two-thirds of the pre-eruption population of over 10,000 had left the island....Three quarters of those remaining on island had also relocated at least once, 20% were sharing accommodation as hosts or guests, and 18% were in public shelters. This means that since July 1995 around 90% of the pre-crisis population have had to move from their original residence.³⁴

5. Pastoral Theology in Perspective

The foregoing description of the historical setting in which the research problem surfaced outlines some important issues and conditions to be revisited during the course of this theological reflection. More specific illustrations from that context will communicate the pastoral theological crises encountered, and will emphasize the need for new theological perspectives informed by these challenges.

Investigation into the failures of pastoral care explores two primary sources. The first includes groups of Montserrat residents reflecting together on their individual and collective experiences of pastoral care and counselling during the disaster. While they did make positive comments, the frequency and sharpness of their negative statements suggest that they did have clear feelings about what acceptable pastoral care should look like within the admittedly traumatic context of the volcanic eruptions. Participants' direct involvement in this research afforded the opportunity

³² See Skelton, T., 1996, "Globalization, Culture and Land: The Case of the Caribbean" p. 324-5, in Kofman, E, Youngs, G. eds., *Globalization, Theory and Practice*, London: Cassell, for a discussion on Montserratians' sense of attachment to place.

³³ Clay, E., Barrow, C., et. al., 1999, *An Evaluation of HMG's Response to the Montserrat Volcanic Emergency. Volume 1*, London: DFID, p. 16

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 17

for “on site” exploration of their theological interpretations of the situation. In response to public promotion of the research project, these persons voluntarily and regularly, indeed with much enthusiasm, came to their focus group meetings. Their enthusiasm for research was part of their commitment to the church’s continuing involvement in pastoral care. It was one way of collectively clarifying the theological concerns of Montserrat residents with regard to pastoral care during the disaster, and thereby contributing to more effective pastoral practice.

The second source is indigenous expression in art forms. In the Caribbean, oral traditions and other cultural art forms have for long served as means to communicate public concern. They graphically illustrate the varying mood and cultural climate in Montserrat during the volcanic eruptions. One artist explains:

I was creating a documentary, documenting the happenings in my country and basically many of the songs are just documents. I mean somebody listening to the songs could capture the spirit of the island, the concerns, the fears, the responses, and in some cases actually, what was happening with the volcano. The different songs are basically just commenting on what’s happening at this period.

(Interview with Randall “Zunky” Greenaway, song writer, March 02, 2004)

In the context of this disaster, the cries of residents were written into poetic expressions and voiced poignantly in calypso form. Musical compositions were used as vehicles to express the people’s discontent with authority figures and with the handling of the volcanic crisis. They were used too, to encourage listeners to resist all measures interpreted as means to belittle them socially and politically. Through careful attention to these creative artistic expressions, one detects resistances to and criticisms of aspects of an imperial culture within which the church is perceived to belong. In the local cultural art forms, therefore, one can find a range of expressions, including theological statements that issue out of individual and collective personal concerns arising during the volcanic crisis. Because people tend not to voice the depth and extent of their anger and despair, and their disapproval of what they may regard as God’s action in relation to the volcano, it is essential to turn to the musical and artistic arena where such theological anxieties are voiced with greater freedom.

In poetry and song, through drama and art, Montserratians found means of verbalising and describing the deeper questions of their lives. They faced unresolved historical issues that surfaced as they evacuated the treasured places where their “navel-strings” were buried, moved into and out of temporary accommodations, said

farewell to lifelong friends and relatives who went abroad, buried their dead, counted their losses, built new houses, and enlarged their families, living as they often sang *One Day at a Time*.³⁵

Using the two mentioned sources enables a solidly-based description and analysis of the theological and pastoral impact of the eruptions of the Soufrière Hills Volcano which have continued for over eleven years. This protraction of disaster has allowed time both for observation of human behaviours and for reflection on some of the factors contributing to human reactions observed in the context of that disaster. Underlying some of these are tacit theologies inherited from Western Christianity and/or long-enduring and intentionally maintained aspects of other cultural legacies. These include culturally imperialistic or elitist theologies of exclusiveness that can foster excessive pietism and a fatalistic otherworldliness that undermines human responsibility for social justice. Some recurring theological concerns are cited below, and as we shall see, there were clearly church and community issues which had long been unresolved before the disaster hit.

Pietistic “ecclesiolatry”

Christianity’s otherworldly focus is prominent in Caribbean churches. Very strong emphasis on the afterlife and a narrow, relentless pursuit of the reward of heaven often referred to as “pie in the sky theology”, has tended to militate against people’s political involvement towards improvement of present living conditions. Church goers have tended to concentrate their efforts on securing life after death, which they believe requires them to be very pious and diligent in meeting their church’s expectations. Throughout the Caribbean, this trend in theology has encouraged an individualistic focus on personal salvation and an understanding that one’s salvation is inseparable from one’s standing in a particular church.

Through suggesting their role as guardians of divine favour, churches have, over the years, presented conformity to ecclesiastical norms as the standard against which

³⁵ The buried navel-string refers to the traditional practice of burying the umbilical cord beneath a tree “owned” by the person whose umbilicus is buried. This cultural feature is often cited as the basis for or expression of attachment to place in Montserrat.

Weekes, E., Cassell, A., 1996, “One Day at a Time”, in *Ride De Riddim*, Arrow Music Ltd. See App.1.1.

God's grace is measured and dispensed. Christian teachings have emphasised the importance of obedience, and persons have tended to believe that blessings are given in proportion to one's obedience to God and to the church. And any distinction between the latter two is discouraged. As a result, the church is sometimes idolised and elevated to the level of the divine. Many church goers slavishly adhere to church rules and routines as their way of ensuring future blessings. Among the 79% of Montserrat's population who claim church affiliation, very few oppose these religious institutions openly, even though in practice many do not conform to their suggested standards.³⁶ For this reason, from an academic standpoint, the critical appraisal offered by church members in this research is valued as a gift, as the only way of accessing such reflective criticism is through open ended discussion in an atmosphere of trust.

Exclusiveness

A strong focus on "chosenness", existing in different branches of Christianity present on Montserrat, sponsors the notion that faithful Christian believers have preferential status over the rest of God's people.³⁷ It is voiced in sermons as well as prayers and underlies everyday conversations. I recall that in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo which left my main roof intact unlike those of my neighbours, one of them said to me: 'The Lord was really watching over you' to which I responded 'If the Lord was watching over me under the shelter of my roof, let's guess who was watching over those who were exposed with galvanize pieces flying around them.'

Subscribing to a false sense of 'privilege', many members believe that the churches' disaster response should give precedence to their needs over those of others. In the context of the volcanic eruptions, it seemed natural to some that their church should dispense relief supplies first to its members and not on the basis of need in the larger

³⁶ Department of Statistics, Government of Montserrat.

According to figures for the Montserrat 2001 census, the figure 79% represents the minimum certified percentage of persons claiming religious affiliation with Christian churches. The breakdown for the total population is as follows: Anglican 21.8, Church of God 3.7, Hindu 0.7, Methodist 17.0, Pentecostal 14.2, Rastafarian 1.4, Roman Catholic 11.6, SDA 10.6, None 2.6, Other 5.8, and Undefined 10.8.

Some of the persons listed as Rastafarian, Other, or undefined would also belong to the broad category of Christian.

³⁷ Graham, E., 1998, "Pastoral care and communitarianism", *Contact*, 125, p.8

Montserrat community. They expected that others be given, but only after they had their received their entitlements. A lay leader describes his frustration in this regard.

One thing that I didn't like, when aid came in, and I fought it - there were churches around the world, you know, that would send supplies... there were those that wanted it restricted to just our members.

(Interview with church lay leaders, CL-D & CL-D2, March 04, 2004)³⁸

This attitude pervaded the response of many congregations to outsiders who used their places of worship as shelters. Where shelterees exhibited socially acceptable behaviours, they were warmly received and catered for by churches, but for others, particularly those unaccustomed to attending worship services, the church's tendency to exclusivity reared its ugly head. While only two such incidents will be discussed further in the dissertation, members' readiness to evict persons from their church shelters was by no means uncommon.

Devaluation of local culture

This tendency to violate the inclusiveness that points to the presence of a universally loving God, which was suddenly highlighted during the volcanic eruptions, actually seems to be a long standing aspect of the colonial legacy. From its arrival in the Caribbean, Christianity in European form was used as an instrument for social control of the colonized peoples.³⁹ The church's history as an accessory to an exclusivist social order which consciously promoted European culture as superior to others is reflected in the way people see themselves as members of a select group in contradistinction to others who do not fit in. This in turn influences their attitudes to European and non-European cultural norms including their very own.

In this regard, the historical church's insistence on a compartmentalisation between aspects of life accepted as sacred and areas categorised as secular is problematic.

³⁸ As explained in the Methodology, the designation CL is given to lay leaders of churches. The third letter (D in this case) is for the researcher's identification of the particular communion. D2 indicates a second lay leader from the same communion.

³⁹ Williams, L., 1996, *The Caribbean. Enculturation, Acculturation and the Role of the Churches*, Geneva: WCC, p.2.

Williams, L., 1994, *Caribbean Theology*, N.Y. Peter Lang, p.22

Smith, A., 1991, *Emerging*, p.10-11

Watty, W., 1981, *From Shore to Shore: Soundings in Caribbean Theology*, Kingston, Jamaica: UTCWI, p 17-19

This is particularly troublesome in Montserrat where the majority of persons are of African descent. The distinction between sacred and secular is, for them, a religious imposition that remains unresolved. It often categorises as irreligious much of the practical wisdom, symbols, myths, rituals and practices that hold spiritual meaning for them and sometimes even requires persons to disown much of the symbolic aspects of their existence. Because historically, European cultural influences have been presented as superior to African elements, church persons are seen to uphold one set of values and symbols while “in church” but for life in general they embrace the cultural richness that church involvement would deny them.

The result is that the rich cultural heritage of Montserratians is not harmoniously integrated into the life of the worshipping community founded on a quite different and alien world-view. When one examines much of the creative arts produced by the community, media that are truly expressive of people’s theological concerns, it is a real pity that the insights of these have not enriched the church’s life and witness. The findings of this research can help to correct this oversight. At present, much of what is classified as “bena music” (secular music), for example, are vehicles for communicating popular theology; but these are never sung in worship and fellowship settings, and are frowned upon by many church officials, for while they may be sacred, they are deemed unacceptable.

Indeed, a sense of God’s presence may be more defined outside of an overtly religious setting.⁴⁰ In Montserrat, maybe the most intense rituals associated with persons’ spirituality, which involve much artistic expression, are manifested outside of the recognised religious arena. There are art forms present in formal church settings, but these are usually based on cultural values originating in the North Atlantic. As a general rule, they tend to reinforce ideologies underlying elitist theologies referred to earlier. The signs, symbols and values conveyed through these imported media do not necessarily help to communicate divine presence since the language and criteria that they offer for symbolising and articulating beliefs about God are foreign to the ethos of the people.

⁴⁰ Dalferth, I., 2001, “Representing God’s Presence”, *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 3, 2, p. 249

Fatalism

The above observation relates mostly, but not only to the churches established as European missionary outposts, that is, the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist churches. During the twentieth century, branches of Pentecostalism, notably North American Pentecostalism were introduced.⁴¹ The Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) is also a significant source of biblical teaching and theological formation. Additionally, with the phenomenal growth of the communications media, Montserratians have twenty-four hour daily access to satellite television broadcasts originating mostly in the United States. In many homes, Christian radio or television is aired for several hours per day, and so what people believe about God is influenced by preaching, teaching and life experiences at the global level.

North American Christian satellite transmission, like the SDA, emphasises apocalyptic beliefs. It is no surprise, then, that many persons interpret current events in terms of the “end times”. This is one recurring fatalistic trend in the apocalyptic setting of the volcanic eruptions. The interviewee below accepted these phenomena as “signs of the times.”

Jesus says that in the last days there would be different things happening in different places, where there'll be distress of nations with perplexity, and there'll be earthquakes and famine and wars, and rumours of wars... When we hear about the things that are happening, train disasters here, airplane disasters there, he said that there would be distress. (Interview with church lay leader, CL-F, March 02, 2004)

⁴¹ Peters, F., 1928, “Montserrat: Brief History and Description”, Plymouth, Montserrat: unpublished typescript available from the Montserrat National Trust, p.18.

Peters gives a rough dating for the arrival of Pentecostal and SDA churches:

Up to the year 1905 there were only three branches of the Christian Church in Montserrat, the Anglican, Wesleyan, and Roman Catholic... In recent years several religious sects have gained a foothold. These Christian Mission sects have Meeting Halls at Plymouth, Harris', Long Ground, Cudjoe Head and Church Hill. During the last five years the Seventh Day Adventists have also established themselves, and hold their meetings at Kinsale and Friths.

The “Christian Mission sects” referred to above include the Pilgrim Holiness Church (now the Wesleyan Holiness Church) (WH) and Pentecostal groups which developed into branches of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the West Indies (PAWI), affiliates of the Assemblies of God in the USA, and the Church of God of Prophecy (CoG). In Montserrat, the generic name “Mission” describes any of these churches, other than the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), established after 1905.

Pentecostals from different communions e.g. PAWI and CoG are classified collectively as Pentecostals in Appendix 2: Participants' data file.

Some persons, like the speaker below, found passive resignation a less demanding way to live. He simply acknowledged the “givenness” of human mortality

You could hide from hurricane, but you can't hide from that [volcano]. If you even ena yuh place you can get burn down. The Government them right to make the people move. And they see to it that they move. For who no move, they send police an' all. Me happy here...

But me could tell you say, me nah leave Montserrat unless, the only how me leave out of Montserrat a when me hear dat everything blow and nobody could live ena Montserrat; but otherwise I'm here to stay because anywhere you go, dead be. Ha, ha, ha!⁴²

At least initially, fatalistic belief presented such serious challenge for pastoral care during the disaster that only mass migration seemed to help the situation. Even when some islanders moved to neighbouring islands soon after eruptions started, fatalism would take its toll. In August and September 1995, Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn caused less damage in Montserrat than it did in the islands to which Montserratians had fled. Many of them felt that they were being warned against leaving the island even though they were afraid of the volcano, and so they went back into an increasingly traumatic situation. When, however, the demand for accommodation in the northern part of the island far exceeded the available spaces, the only option left was for many more persons to live overseas.

Attitudes to material prosperity

Interestingly, the external sources that promote various brands of apocalypticism and fuel fatalistic belief also sponsor a religion of prosperity. Some people find encouragement in this and consequently pursue economic success as proof of divine favour. In the situation of extreme loss as so many experienced during the volcanic eruptions, this value system had both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, it seemed to push them to make the most of available opportunities for improvement of their situation. That had negative aspects as it turned out to be a stimulant for what presented itself as selfishness and greed, traits not uncommon among traumatised persons. Participants in field research stated this observation.

⁴² Fergus, H, 1996, “People Talk Their Mind”, p. 39, in Fergus, H., ed., *Eruption. Montserrat Versus Volcano*, Plymouth, Montserrat: UWI School of Continuing Studies

In global perspective

The cultural invasion advanced by the communications media did more than suggest a religion of prosperity. Access to television and internet communications meant that people were kept abreast of developments worldwide. That stimulated their critical abilities as they were able to interpret their experiences within a global context. Often, that meant they were more tolerant and grateful for benefits they enjoyed and took a constructive approach to reconstruction efforts since they were well aware of comparatively worse situations overseas.

The presence of migrant Caribbean workers who came to assist with reconstruction also helped persons to put their experience into the broader perspective of the experiences of humanity. Generally, global realities challenged persons like the speaker below to review theological presuppositions.

But I mean, we are not different to other people in different parts of the world, there so many disasters are taking place. Seeing the disaster in Montserrat I don't think that people are saying well [it is] because people are wicked in those places why the things are happening. So why they have to think that is because we are wicked?

(Interview with church lay leader, CL-B, March 02, 2004)

Theological reflection on previous experience of disaster

The volcanic eruptions have continued for eleven years. Persons have had opportunity to assess and to revise their theological beliefs. Some have adopted attitudes on the basis of learning from experience including previous disasters. The discussion recorded in Appendix 3A, an extract of a transcript from field research, gives some indication that theological positions are taken with previous disaster experience in mind.

In the transcript, participants discuss their feelings during two specific eruptions that occurred on September 17, 1996 and July 12, 2003. The first speaker refers to a *frightening experience* during which the volcano rained pumice and persons were driving northwards to escape injury. Notwithstanding their fright, she and her guest use reason to decide on an appropriate response which was based on previous learning. Others describe how they have come to find value in prayer rather than in needless worry. This is casually mentioned in the context of other learned precautions such as staying indoors during heavy ash emissions for safety reasons

and wearing protective helmets, or like one community leader, not becoming overpowered by work to be done.

The reference to Hurricane Hugo is also significant since residents frequently claim that lessons they learned from the prior hurricane experience had helped them to cope during the volcanic eruptions. In this rather matter of fact sharing about their learned ways of avoiding panic, one hears a note of acceptance of human vulnerability, something encountered in a previous natural disaster.

The use of local dialect helps to convey an intimate recognition of divine sovereignty. The phrase *sleepless God* betrays a sense of confidence that God's action is predictably favourable however else it is understood. A sense of calm in distress comes when peace is negotiated through recognition of human powerlessness in the situation, and finally, reliance on prayer. While the expression *whatever will be will be* does sound fatalistic, it is really through prayer that peace cancels the chaos of knowing that the situation was beyond human control

6. Conclusion

The mix of theological and political concerns surfacing in the volcanic disaster was reflected in many of the testimonies to which I am privy. There is strong correspondence between these intimations and community expressions recorded in cultural art forms. Reading the poems of children, youth and adults, listening to the songs of men and women, and sitting in audiences at drama productions, I heard echoes of themes voiced in private encounters, and personal questions repeated in the public arena: Is this a test of faith? Are we really paying for our sins? Why do some outsiders think that we are worse off than they are? Why do they not recognise the hand of God protecting us and providing for our needs? But how long will this last? How much more stress? Will things ever get back to normal? What should Christian people do? Isn't the church supposed to lead the way now? How come so many pastors' families are evacuating? Aren't ministers supposed to have more faith? What is worse, the volcano or people's selfishness? How can something so dangerous be so beautiful? Is that how people themselves are? How caring are the inquisitive scientists and social researchers who invade our privacy and produce one questionnaire after another? Have we become objects in their quest for knowledge? Do the British care about us anyway?

Persons obviously knew that there were causes other than “British stress” for their anger and frustration. Living in long-term “temporary shelters”, many had come face to face with the depth of the human condition - selfishness, greed and corruption, issues documented in song.⁴³ But they had also been beneficiaries of the best that humankind has to offer - generosity, hospitality, empathy, co-operation, goodness, love. Crisis conditions had pushed them to investigate the truth about themselves.

On reflection, then, the questions arising in the volcano crisis were not all new ones. The disaster merely emphasised deep human concerns already present but too long ignored. The Montserrat experience suggests that disasters do not create need but rather highlight pre-existing problems. In that sense, the real big issues may be the human “disasters waiting to happen.”

This theological reflection seeks to focus on these deeper issues. It is not intended to be a manual of pastoral psychotherapy for caregivers working in disaster situations. While it seeks to utilise insights from Psychology, its immediate aim is not to provide a step-by-step “how-to” guide for counsellors. Its focus is on presenting informed theological reflection as a valuable tool for enhancing pastoral praxis. The insights derived from this study can inform pastoral practices toward the alleviation and possibly prevention of some aspects of human crises such as encountered in Montserrat. The research outcomes are also useful in guiding the application of culturally sensitive counselling approaches in Montserrat, the wider Caribbean, and elsewhere.

To this end, this research report continues, in the next chapter, with methodological concerns. It presents the researcher as the main instrument in the research, and gives details of investigative procedures and explains the theological method of *shared Christian praxis*. In Chapter Three an overview of pastoral care is given. This critical review of literature is combined with “live texts” from the Montserrat context and they form the basis for the critique of pastoral processes “When Care Fails” in Chapter Four. The cases presented in the fourth chapter are selected precisely because they highlight inadequacies in pastoral care according to current practice. In four of the five cases described, the researcher was the main pastoral caregiver, thereby gaining considerable insight into careseekers’ expectations and

⁴³ Francis, H., 1995, “Eruption of Corruption” in *Take De Road*, Olveston, Montserrat: Unlimited Access Studios, See App. 1.2.

dissatisfaction with pastoral processes as they experienced them. In perspective, these pastoral experiences are counted among those that provided initial stimulation for the researcher.

The issues noted in Chapter Four were constantly replayed across the research setting. Some of these were considered on in depth in focus group meetings. Other concerns which might not have been reflected as thoroughly were, however, conversation pieces and stressors among interviewees, on radio talk shows, in popular music, drama presentations and informal discussions. These matters surfaced in a diversity of situations on Montserrat. Research participants' theological reflection on these varied concerns provided data to be analysed in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five consists of three theological reflections. These include discussion and analysis of some of the concerns most intensely reflected on by research participants. Chapter Six presents a single theological reflection dealing with issues occurring most frequently among residents on Montserrat.

The study, which critiques but also affirms resources of the Christian tradition present on Montserrat, concludes with a summary of research findings. The conclusion offers pastoral care ways of engaging some of the more complex issues of culture in the Caribbean in light of the Montserrat disaster situation. It highlights the potential of *Shared Christian Praxis* as a theological method and suggests how the insights gained through this research can help the development of a more appropriate contextual model of theological reflection for enhanced pastoral praxis in Montserrat, the Caribbean, and elsewhere.

Pastoral Care in Disaster: A Theological Reflection

Chapter Two: Methodological Issues

1. Introduction

Pastoral theology ...is the place where religious belief, tradition and practice meets contemporary experiences, questions and actions and conducts a dialogue which is intellectually critical and practically transforming..."¹

This study seeks to inform pastoral action of caregivers by suggesting a way forward in the light of reflections upon and critical analyses of lived experiences of a particular people. In the process, three features useful for the articulation of a pastoral theology are recognisable. First, the research has as its starting point specific human experiences encountered in the course of active ministry. In this sense, it is virtually impossible to locate the beginning of the search for knowledge in the academy. The very stimulus for academic research is rooted in pastoral practice where reflections on the situation under discussion suggested weaknesses in current models of care as presented in contemporary literature.

Secondly, the investigation takes seriously the community relationships from which pastoral theological perspectives derive and in which they may be applied. Representatives of the Montserrat community, who have lived in the context of the volcanic eruptions, shared in small group reflections for which the researcher provided necessary leadership and coordination. Through the involvement of research participants working together the study highlights the need for contextualization. Too often, pastoral theology has ignored the specific settings for the practice of ministry. Admittedly, it has been argued that theology is always embedded in practice, Don Browning being a notable proponent of this view. But his admission of a 'gulf ...between our high-level texts and courses and the practical activity of religious education, care, preaching, and worship' is testimony to the real extent of a divorce between theory and practice in the exercise of ministry.²

¹ Pattison, *A Vision of Pastoral Theology*, p.2

² Browning, D., 1991, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p. 8

Thirdly, the research aim is to discern theological meaning from people's discussion and reflections. Field inquiry, which constituted a first level of analysis, was followed by the interpretive phases of academic deconstruction of stated beliefs or opinions proffered and synthesis of ideas. Selection and articulation of theological perspectives were means towards an end - enhancing the delivery of pastoral care especially in the context of disaster.

This chapter focuses on the three methodological concerns listed above. The section immediately following presents the researcher as the main research tool. Section 3 summarises the research procedures she employed in accessing perspectives from the community. Section 4 concentrates on the actual process of theological reflection used to articulate meaning in the situation. It was this method that facilitated critique of pastoral practices and affirmation of theological resources present in the situation. The final section details the procedures in the conduct of research prior to, during and subsequent to field investigations.

2 The Interpreter

The task of this research is largely an interpretive one. It is an attempt to generate theory by pulling together insights and inferences from a variety of sources that represent both individual and collective thought. One would, therefore, expect the negotiation of dialogue between these sources to be uniquely influenced by the researcher whose task it is to unify that which is variously expressed.

While in this study the exploration of knowledge has as its starting point categories issuing from group reflections, these are often reappraised through further corporate study. On occasion, scrutiny may be stimulated by individual critique, expressed or implied. Sometimes, facets of seemingly disparate opinions and deductions are interwoven to promote understanding of the problem under investigation. How this happens depends, in large measure, on the person doing the interpretation.

At the broader level, pastoral theology itself has been described as a process of interpretation and re-interpretation.³ Pembroke elaborates on this and suggests four areas where the interpretive skills of the pastoral theologian are employed - in the treatment of themes from the Christian tradition, in the application of human sciences theory, in the consideration of dynamics in community and society, and in surveying

³ Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology*, p.10-11

the exercise of care by practitioners acting for the church.⁴ These four areas are integral to the research under consideration, further emphasising the place of interpretation in this work.

At the individual personal level, the pastoral theologian must facilitate interpretation, and the communication of that interpretation. For this, she needs to avoid confusion regarding her identity.

... if there is no means of self-consciously articulating and identifying what is going on and what one is becoming, it can be destructive or unhelpfully compromising.⁵

In addition, this particular pastoral theological reflection is informed by ethnographic sources, so the principal researcher must be attentive to issues of her own identity.

Writing from an anthropologist's perspective, Davies also contends that the 'interpreted quality of ethnographic data is ... unavoidable' since every manner of recording social reality is partial and reflective of the ethnographer's perceptions.⁶

This chapter, therefore, contains a disclosure on the part of the researcher - the interpreter. It gives some indication of significant formative factors associated with her spiritual pilgrimage and speaks of personal bias bestowed by history. In accord with the postmodern view of human agency as historically situated and contingent, it is an admission that the capacity for both observation and analysis are conditioned. In contrast to postmodernist methodology, however, the study assumes a critical realist perspective. Whereas the postmodernist insistence on decentring and multiple perspectives inevitably restricts the applicability of insights gained from any particular situation, the conviction here is that the knowledge derived from the Montserrat experience can be accessed and investigated with a view to its application in similar contexts. With this end in mind, the interpreter, aware of the indispensable need for a critical self-consciousness, has adopted a fundamentally reflexive stance in the treatment of ethnographic data during the research processes. It is, as recommended, a critical self-awareness that extends beyond the researcher's personal

⁴ Pembroke, N., 1999, "Presence and shame in pastoral counselling", PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, p.12

⁵ Pattison, *A Vision of Pastoral Theology*, p.7

⁶ Davies, C., 1999, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*, London: Routledge, p. 215

social identities into the wider cultural background and takes into account disciplinary perspectives that inform the analytic discourse.⁷

Since this research has as its starting point human suffering as encountered in disaster, the disclosure begins with my journey through human pain and suffering, illustrated in the first section by references to a selection of formative experiences and in the second by encounters during the Montserrat volcanic eruptions.

Self-awareness in pain and suffering

Many persons commend my stoical endurance during the Montserrat volcanic disaster. My more recent bouts of depression consequent to institutional abuse of power against me, however, seemed confusing to those who knew me best. From a psychological perspective, these could be explained in terms of post traumatic stress. But my intention here is not to focus on pastoral psychotherapy. I simply wish to articulate this paradox of my response which is related to past experience. It is likely that whatever fortitude I displayed as a Methodist minister offering consolation in the disaster situation has accrued from learning through exposure to human pain and suffering. Similarly, my emotional collapse in response to victimization has much to do with the inherited priority I place on right relationship with the persons with whom I live and work. Using specific incidents for illustration, I will discuss briefly these two aspects of my formation, perspectives that both informed my approach to pastoral care in the disaster and guide my interpretive role in this research.

The individual personal voice of the interpreter

Pain and Suffering: Glimpses From Earlier On

I recall the tap on my left shoulder as I sat in church for my First Holy Communion. Both my parents had missed this Catholic rite of passage because of the critical illness of my infant brother. Someone was touching me to signal that my brother had died. When I returned home, my mother, who was herself inconsolable, told me that my little brother was gone to heaven to pray for me.

For a seven year old that provided long lasting assurance. It did not suggest that hurt of the type I was feeling, or distress such as my mother was experiencing, would be

⁷ Davies, op. cit., p.213.

absent from my life, but that there would be provision to overcome pain. I learned to claim a supernatural enabling presence helping me as a Catholic teenager who regularly visited the sick and disabled at home and in institutions. On hospital wards I came into frequent contact with those who were seriously ill and sometimes dying. While those visits seldom occurred because a relative, friend or acquaintance was hospitalised, there have been many family experiences of severe illness.

Three of my siblings were severely asthmatic. We lived in a poor Dominican village with largely undeveloped medical facilities, so the question of dying was one which we pondered only too frequently. That may explain why years later I could warmly cradle my own son during his crises of sickle cell anaemia, fully aware that each cuddle could be our last. While having to face the reality of death very often, I learned to live in hope, and to treasure the alternate possibility in life. Even as I write, my adult son is recovering from his latest sickle cell crisis.

His sister, my first child, was almost aborted before birth. From the twelfth week through its duration to full term, the pregnancy constituted an emergency that started with a traffic accident. The minibus in which we were travelling had overturned and rolled slowly down a hillside. As people trod over me in their efforts to escape further injury, I prayed for the safe delivery of my baby, remembering an incident from my high school years. The recollection was one of being trampled by a human stampede as the crowd exited a basketball match after an electrical fire. On my journey, then, I have come to know that even painful waiting might yield rich results. This lesson was reinforced during my mother's illness.

In the first year of the Montserrat volcanic eruptions, I made a sudden trip to Dominica where my mother had been hospitalised. Following signs of recovery, she became comatose. I travelled with her seemingly lifeless body to a modern hospital in Guadeloupe where we received the neurologist's prognosis. He told us, "If she don't die tonight, I move her from intensive care. No use." The terrible news was bearable because, by then, I enjoyed the company of siblings. From that point we had to face the likelihood of her death or, possibly worse, her remaining in a vegetative state. After the family's two year struggle through our mother's surgery and rehabilitation, her short term memory restored, she had regained most of her prior skills and her zest for life. Throughout this period I felt a range of indescribable emotions. But in the situation, the ability to sustain hope in the midst of difficulty was more powerful than the crippling sensations of fear and anxiety, so the value of

communicating hope is all the more real to me. This is reflected in both my efforts to inspire hope in the crisis and to identify sources of hope during the course of this theological reflection.

Pain and Suffering in the Volcanic Experience

If, during the Montserrat volcanic crisis, I served as inspiration, as so many people say, it may well be because the power of hope has served me well. Having understood it to be my duty as a pastor, I encouraged persons to leave their homes for safety, sometimes against their will. Then I visited them relocated in shelters where their human dignity was at stake as they were stripped of privacy and their sense of worth was threatened. In these situations, the best and worst things happened to interpersonal relations. I was encouraged through seeing many people united in suffering, most sharing of their resources and in their firm resolve to cope with the worst, but I also worked in situations where the best of friends had become enemies.

Watching people's family houses, places of work and leisure, and the very landscape being destroyed, I shared their sense of loss. As a pastor I was involved in their most tragic loss, the death of family members. For the families with whom I worked directly, there was further trauma because it was impossible to recover the remains of their relatives buried beneath searing volcanic debris. This was possibly even more harrowing for these people because among Montserratians pre-burial rituals and funeral rites are highly visible social events.

For Montserratian society, the most painful element of the crisis was the separation of families as residents left for foreign shores. But it was necessary that many should leave. There were no places for them to stay, no schools to attend, no jobs to sustain them. Some were consumed by fear and needed a less frightening environment. It was part of my responsibility as a Methodist minister to communicate with churches abroad and prepare a worthy reception for those who had expressed their desire to leave. I wished that this could have been done for all. But there were many who left in secrecy, fearing the stigma of being branded as fearful or lacking in faith.

Not all those who migrated did so for family, medical health, or economic reasons. In many cases, theological concerns were a contributory factor. Some pastors chose to leave Montserrat for family reasons but a few advised their congregations to completely evacuate the island which, they said, was doomed for destruction. Their pronouncement came in spite of scientific advice that the north of the island was a

safe place to live in. Some persons felt deserted by their pastors and sought counsel from those of us who remained on island.

In seeking to provide for many who sought counsel, I felt that the current models of pastoral counselling were inadequate for our situation. While most seemed to reflect the western academy's insistence on objective standards through suggesting styles of non-directional counselling, people wanted pastors who were prepared to forgo their non-directive roles and be guides. Persons were seeking spiritual direction as to available options for Christian people at a time when, in more than a figurative sense, the ground was shifting beneath their feet.

Saturday August 12- Sunday August 13, 1995 was a case in point. Over one hundred tremors were recorded by seismic equipment at the MVO.⁸ Residents of Montserrat felt over thirty of these. Many were simply too exhausted and others too unsettled to attend church services on Sunday morning. To compound the situation, those who made it to worship at a particular Methodist chapel listened to the preacher berating people's lack of faith as she referred to the decline in attendance. Exasperated, several persons sought guidance from me. Among them were family members contemplating relocation abroad. They had questions and needed answers. It would have been unwise for me to unilaterally take decisions on their behalf, but it fell to me as pastor to play a leading role in helping them discover options with which they could live and still maintain their integrity as Christian believers.

The available models for pastoral care and counselling did not speak to the situation of persons who had to take decisive action while the total environment - physical, economic, social, political, and spiritual - was changing rapidly. There was no constancy of resources, human or material, to which one could resort. Social networks including churches were in a state of transition, with families often in chaos. In this atmosphere of acute transitoriness, we did not have the luxury of time in which to grow towards responsible decision making.

From my involvement in pastoral care in the crisis, it seemed that failures in pastoral response were not restricted to the abandonment felt by some residents. From a leadership perspective at the local and ecumenical levels, I became aware of the insufficiency of the institutional church's challenge to deep and binding socio-

⁸ MVO archives

political realities that stifle the delivery of care and exacerbate an already pitiful state of affairs for people who have come to view the Church as purveyor of divine favour. For the most part, during the volcanic crisis, the churches functioned as relief agencies dispensing food and donated clothing, temporary shelter, income support, and counselling services. Development assistance was given in cases such as the MCCA / UMCOR (Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas / United Methodist Committee on Relief) resettlement of farmers at Trants, and the Montserrat Christian Council (MCC) support programmes for farmers and fishers; but this in no way required the churches to reformulate their approach to caring for a community whose sense of powerlessness was a critical factor prompting people to constantly seek God, through the Church, to act on their behalf.

Self-awareness: The multiple voices of the interpreter

The Interpreter: Pastor, Theologian and Interlocutor

A Christian both through choice and circumstance, I assess my life situations within a framework of divine grace. In God's varied grace as I understand it, a number of influences shape my self-understanding, attitudes and practices as a pastor and theologian. These in turn affect my capacity to mediate between theoretical perspectives on pastoral care and my own experiences and perceptions arising in the fields of pastoral ministry and academic research. My passion for engagement in this research has much to do with the worlds from which I come, the people and places I have journeyed with and through.

I began this disclosure with the admission of a paradox in my response to hurt and pain. To some extent, my service to others during the volcanic crisis was a response to the giftedness of others with whom I had previously lived and worked. It may well be that in the experience of victimisation I witnessed a 'shattering of my basic assumptions' regarding the benevolence of colleagues.⁹ This was psychologically traumatic for me, since I view my place in harmonious social relationships as an index of my acceptance in any particular community.

⁹ Janoff-Bulman, R., 1992, *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma*, N.Y.: Free Press. The expression 'shattering of my basic assumptions' reflects the author's usage throughout this work.

For this research into pastoral care in disaster, I understand my academic role in interpreting to be a function carried out on behalf of the Montserrat community of which I am part. I see myself as an instrument in the articulation of its many voices. My insider knowledge suggests that their lived volcano experiences are full of meaning for Montserratians. Meaning is, however, socially constructed. Hence no theology of care would have sufficed that ignored the cultural emotional and political climate during the eruptions. A relevant approach would be necessarily sensitive both to the island's colonial status and to the people's cultural readiness to reclaim certain marginalised historical traditions. Elements of anti-colonial resistance and political theological inclinations permeating their expressions of faith suggest parameters for a useful pastoral theology. Recognition of these local attitudinal postures is important since theological method makes a good beginning when it starts where meaning comes alive.

While I emphasise my interpretive role as a facet of my responsibility to a community that has helped to sustain me, this awareness is held in tension with my own experiential knowledge that societal forces can erode one's sense of belonging; and the field research context illustrated this well. Sometimes, people who experience repeated discrimination become hostile to society and discontinue the search for community. For others, prior experience of acceptance and hospitality, and the celebration of survival, encourage aspirations towards community. Locating myself in the latter group, remembering my own experience of exclusion because of colour and class, and placing value on gender as a critical category, I choose to identify myself as womanist. Speaking out of the three-fold experiences of gender, race and class oppression, womanists look beyond the negative aspects of their experience and embrace a universalistic outlook that respects heterogeneity.¹⁰

I am a self-conscious hybrid, aware that I come from different worlds, and pleased to express the different aspects of my cultural and ethnic hybridity. In a sense, there are within me what I call "intra-personal differences" that boost my integrity as a person.

¹⁰ Black theology rejects a universal outlook in that it ignores the particularities of human situations and hence perpetuates injustice. See Cone, J., 1986, *A Black Theology of Liberation. Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, p.84-87. Womanists are universalists in the sense illustrated by Alice Walker's definition of *womanist*. '... Traditional universalist as in "Mama, why are we pink, brown and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige, and black?" Answer: "Well, you know the colored race is just like a flower garden with every color flower represented." See Walker, A., 1987, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. Womanist Prose*, London: The Women's Press

These I cherish without fear of my disintegrating into a schizophrenic personality. In the same way, interpersonal differences must be valued in any discussion on community. My own hybridity impels me to speak out of difference and to resist politically expedient attempts to dissolve differences among persons. I fully support James Fernandez in his insistence that we resist communication that results in homogenisation of human beings and forces upon them a uniform voice.¹¹ This stifles their voices since they are not allowed to speak. For me, the inclination to community does not fulfil a desire to replicate any system of uniform standards that boost the status quo. Such an agenda has fostered the identity crisis known to Caribbean peoples. It is to our advantage that, in this research, a pluralism of viewpoints is encouraged, and that there is commitment to the inclusion of the excluded.

In this regard, I find Thomas Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis* a particularly inviting model for theological reflection. Its direct involvement of the community in shared research, not merely as information providers but rather as agents of knowledge, is both inviting and challenging. Clearly distinguishable as a process that does not distance or reduce persons into 'bits of dispassionate data' it also seeks to utilise the skills of persons like myself engaged in professional ministry.¹² While by no means offering a panacea in terms of research methodology, it stimulates creativity within an overall format conducive to disciplined academic study. The recommended inquiry into political and cultural influences in faith practice is pivotal to the examination of factors shaping the research environment, that is, Montserrat in the context of the volcanic eruptions.

Pain and Suffering: The Journey Continues

I turn to my own trauma and fragility. I felt a sense of abandonment when the leadership of the church that I had served faithfully refused to recognise my need for rest and reflection. At a time when I most needed it, support and affirmation were denied. That strengthens my consciousness as a researcher of the social tensions that people face in their search for transcendence. Harsh institutional strictures were

¹¹ Fernandez, J., 1987, "Anthropology as a Vocation: Listening to Voices", Guest Editorial in *Cultural Anthropology: a Perspective on the Human Condition*, Chicago, p.14-5.

¹² Myers, W., 1996, "Keeping the Faith While Doing Research in Ministry", *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 50, 2, p.203. The categorisation of *Shared Christian Praxis* as such a process is mine.

tolerable only because I was able to place my engagement in this research into a sacrificial framework.

The research experience has been a sort of sequel in the soul journey through the volcanic crisis in Montserrat which heightened consciousness of my own vulnerability as a caregiver. Tremendous physical and emotional pressures were imposed by the situation but additional stresses issued from my own particular approach in response to human need. That awareness has guided me as a pastor with prophetic responsibility to apportion blame. Sometimes, people are made to endure needless suffering, emotional and otherwise, by persons and structures that prey on their sense of powerlessness. The pastoral task involves helping victims identify and counter the effects of such oppressive forces. But my mission is to do this without necessarily absolving people from responsibility for their own personal growth. While pastoral care must seek to remove rather than to impose inappropriate guilt feelings, it involves an inherent cost to both the caregiver and the careseeker.¹³

Through painful experiences of caring for and working among sick persons, I have come to learn the value of a pastoral presence, lay or clergy, individual or collective, and to appreciate its capacity to mitigate the malignant. The need for mutuality on the part of the ones giving and receiving care is important. Personal knowledge of vulnerability and uncertainty, desolation and despair often serves to maintain the integrity that validates pastoral care.¹⁴

In my moments of abandonment, times when I could more easily identify with the lost and disorganised, the “sheep without a shepherd”, what helped me most was the presence of some person(s) to communicate hope. In the context of the Montserrat volcanic disaster, I sought to be this sort of person - a “wounded healer” conscious of the need for human compassion. The need for wounded healers persists. There are always those who require persons to help them overcome during periods of crisis. It is easier for them to identify with and to trust helpers who can access strength through recognition of their own weakness.

¹³ Lyall, D., 1995, *Counselling in the Pastoral and Spiritual Context*, Buckingham: Open University Press, p.66-9. His statement is made in the context of a discussion on the cost of counseling. This study, however, highlights the impossibility of a neat separation between care and counseling needs in the disaster situation.

¹⁴ Campbell, A., 1981, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, p.12

Their approach to helping reflects a theology of the cross that accepts hope in God's possibility as a bridge out of the most desperate situations. Christian understandings of the message of the cross which hold a valuable place for sacrifice, though not universally appealing, remain a source of healing for many. My interest here is reflected in a search for Christian approaches to resolving human crises in times when faith is tested. While there is no intention to exclude anyone from participation in pastoral care practices, it seems both desirable and practicable that Christian perspectives be reflected in the research outcomes.

The use of *Shared Christian Praxis* in this theological search holds potential for uncovering dimensions of truth. It is a reasonable method for exploring the contextual issues of the Montserrat situation - Caribbean Christian faith and understanding, African cultural retentions, colonial politics and postcolonial resistances, pain and suffering in disaster, trauma and increased awareness of the human condition - all these flung into one melting pot of human experience.

3. Research Procedures

While one specific theological method, *Shared Christian Praxis*, was selected to guide the reflective processes involved, the overall research strategy incorporated a variety of methods. Different techniques were employed depending on their adequacy for tasks to be carried out at various stages. The main tasks are outlined here.

Previously documented ethnographic data as well as that resulting from the meetings with research participants constituted primary sources for field research. Information regarding the community's perceptions of pastoral care during the volcanic crisis was accessed from a number of cultural sources - literature, drama, music, audio-visual exhibits and community events. Analyses of community responses articulated through the arts involved direct interviewing of the artists who represented the community. This served to clarify the researcher's understanding of messages mediated in these cultural forms which research participants regarded as expressing their feelings. It is important to recognise that the artists speak for the people since, in Montserrat and the wider Caribbean, the art forms represent recognised vehicles for the expression of community concerns.

Representative persons who played leadership roles in political, religious and other social spheres were involved in this research. Interviews with them created

opportunity for issues related to the delivery of care to be presented from the perspective of community leaders. This helped bring balance to the description of the social-cultural-political environment in which theological reflections occurred.

Interviews were also conducted with pastoral caregivers no longer resident in Montserrat, but who had served there during the earlier phases of the disaster situation. This component was judged necessary because current residents frequently expressed the sentiment that caregivers who had, on their own initiative, relocated abroad had shirked their pastoral responsibility.

The recalled experiences, both oral and written, of Christian laypersons and clergy leaders were vital. The central component of the field research process was the collection of data through recorded meetings of focus groups representative of the faith community which is in turn comprised of various congregations, associated persons and groups of persons. These small groups engaged in theological reflections using a modified version of *Shared Christian Praxis* as proposed by Thomas Groome. This theological method was also employed by the researcher for subsequent reflection and analysis of data derived from the field.

Some related empirical data was obtained from the records of the Montserrat Volcano Observatory (MVO) and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). The first agency derived data through routine monitoring of the eruptions while the second supervised evacuations, provision of housing and other basic needs. The Department for International Development (DFID) Montserrat saw to the needs of those persons desiring to relocate abroad to the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Caribbean. This information was useful for critiquing and/or validating self-reports given after a lapse in time. Interviews were also conducted with the heads of these institutions.

Documentation regarding the aims, methods and outcomes of planned interventions by the Montserrat Branch of the British Red Cross, the MCC and the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) was studied. These organisations cooperatively undertook the delivery of community counselling programmes. These care mediating agencies provided scant but valuable field data to supplement information provided by group participants.

During preparation for field work, the researcher's reading about disasters such as the 1966 Aberfan coal mine disaster in Wales, the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in 1986, and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001,

pointed to some common reactions from people across cultures. In certain instances their theological interpretations were similar to those encountered among persons on Montserrat. This was the case although the incidents were not all categorised as natural disasters. The observation suggested that she explore their responses which could indicate the usefulness of the Montserrat investigations for other contexts. Since a major human induced disaster had occurred in Scotland in 1989, she interviewed some survivors of the Lockerbie airline disaster.

4. Research Methodology

A chronological account of the research will be better understood in light of the following information:

- A description of *Shared Christian Praxis* as proposed by Thomas Groome
- Rationale for the selection of this methodology, in particular its suitability to the Montserrat context
- Crucial issues arising from the research context, and
- Adjustments in *Shared Christian Praxis* for the research project

Shared Christian Praxis: a theological method

As a methodology for doing theology, *Shared Christian Praxis* consists of five logically sequential but overlapping movements in a reflection on a subject.

The Focussing Activity

The aim is to generate a theme for discussion. Every event of *shared Christian praxis* calls participants to initially focus on a *generative theme* or themes that will provide the impetus for their reflection on present praxis. This may happen by way of an invitation to express in word, deed, or sign, one's response to a symbol. Expressions ordinarily point to life themes of interest to participants' 'being' in the world.

Ideally, this engagement generates themes that both communicate the gist of the teaching/ learning encounter and hold shared meaning in the lives of participants.¹⁵

Historical issues related to the volcano crisis matters had collective significance for those taking part in the research.

¹⁵ Groome, op. cit., p. 155-7

The greatest challenge for the principal researcher was to offer democratic leadership in stimulating the emergence of interesting and relevant themes. Obviously, earlier pastoral reflections and prior textual perspectives were significant motivators in my case. Yet a democratic approach was vitally important since the direct involvement of participants was absolutely essential for subsequent movements. Since participants enjoyed the freedom to express themselves from the start of discussion, they tended to be very open in disclosing their ideas and feelings.

In my experience, it is not in the researcher's best interest to seek to steer participants' expressions at this stage. Having already exercised control in the selection of a symbol around which expressions are centred, further strictures on the outcome of this movement may only serve to stifle the process. The emergence of further exciting possibilities depends as much on the participants' contributions as it does on the group leader's attending to, understanding, and subsequently analysing inputs derived from and owned by the focus groups. If the *focussing activity* failed to capture group members' interest it was unlikely to foster their involvement as *agent-subjects*. Below we read the author's explanation of this term.

In this cumulative phrase, I use the term *subject* to signify the intrinsic value of persons qua persons, a meaning heightened when we think of subject in contrast to object, the latter always being something of a qualified value. I preface it with *agent* to emphasize the originating and historically responsible dimension of human "subjectivity"; "agent *subjects*" are to be consciously aware, reflective, discerning, and responsible people. *Agent* as the modifier of *subject* also helps to avoid the possible connotation of the later as in "subject to."¹⁶

The *focussing activity* like the other movements of *shared Christian praxis* reflects the influence of feminist critique of establishment epistemology. These movements of discovery and learning are also responsive to liberation theology's critique of western theological methods. They derive from a search for a new pedagogy - one that aims at learners' knowing, doing and being what, according to their critical judgement, satisfies the ethical demands of a given situation. Whereas Western preoccupation with rationality has encouraged a dichotomy between knowing and being, the intended outcome of Christian involvement should be 'conation' rather than 'cognition'. By calling for an 'epistemic ontology' as we find in *shared Christian praxis*, Groome appeals for an 'ontological turn' that engages all the

¹⁶ Groome, op. cit., p. 8-9

dynamics of ‘human being’. Epistemologically, learning experiences should turn participants to the consciousness that arises from their whole ‘being’ as agent-subjects located in space and time.

Theological justification for participation in the focussing activity and in subsequent movements is found in two tenets of Christian theology. The first is that God reveals Godself to humankind. The second related belief is the existence of humans as subject-agents within events of God’s self-disclosure. These claims suggest that persons can and do actively encounter and recognise God’s revelation in the context of their own historicity. The revelatory impact is appreciated further as human beings engage in their own deliberate reflection on their present action in the world.¹⁷

Movement 1: Naming/ Expressing ‘Present Praxis’

In Movement 1 the generative theme serves as a catalyst for persons to name or to otherwise express their understanding of society’s and/ or their own praxis with regard to the stated theme. Their naming/ expressing includes statements and gestures related to their ‘sentiments, attitudes, feelings, or intuitions’; how they perceive, describe, and assess present action- ‘the operative values, meanings, and beliefs’ they detect in it; and what their commitments and values are regarding such praxis.¹⁸

The importance here is that persons are able to step back and, in a sense, to ‘objectify’ their own consciousness of present praxis so that they can later reflect critically upon it. Of course, there is already a measure of critical reflection at Movement 1 as in the focussing activity itself. Knowledge is itself already interpreted if it is to be recognised as such. In the same vein, praxis is involved at the latter stages of the process. Even experiential knowledge is always being reinterpreted. What the processes of shared praxis offer is the continuing opportunity for collaborative critical reflection.

Because it is vital that participants make their own expressions, facilitating Movement 1 is personally demanding for the group leader.

[S/he] has a significant role to be catalyst of a hospitable environment in which participants can take the risk to share their own perception of

¹⁷ Groome, op. cit., p. 159-64

¹⁸ ibid., p.175-7

present praxis rather than settling for what they intuit as expected by the group or by their social/ ecclesial context. They are supposed to have their own say rather than saying what they are supposed to say.¹⁹

The philosophical rationale for Movement 1 is that genuine dialogue is essential to the promotion of conation. Accepting Freire's concept of agent subjects and his insistence that teaching/ learning methods respect the human need for expression, for 'speaking one's word', Groome describes participants' historical role as *agent-subjects- in-relationship*.²⁰ We have seen above the implication of *agent-subjects*. Here I continue the author's amplification.

...I use *agent-subjects-in-relationship* to indicate that the authentic "being" of people is always realized "in relationship" with others in time and place.²¹

Allowing one's expression of interpretation of present praxis to be placed in dialogue with other people's expressions 'is essential for responsible freedom and social transformation.'²²

From a theological standpoint, persons' statements concerning current praxis are reflective of their own historicity and provide valuable data for their understanding and appropriation of divine revelation.

Movement 2: Critical Reflection on Present Action

In Movement 2, the reflective moment is deepened as individuals and the group engage in critical and social reasoning, analytical and social remembering, and creative and social imagining. As people consider together what is or is not representative of God's will in present praxis, in their reasoning, remembering, and imagining, the more likely they are to discern the divine will and to seek transcendence in daily living.²³

Building on their own statements/ expressions elicited in Movement 1, participants 'intentionally express the consciousness that arises from their conative activities as agent-subjects regarding the generative theme of the learning occasion.' Such

¹⁹ Groome, op. cit., p. 178

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 49-50 citing Freire, P., 1985, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*

²¹ *ibid.*, p.9

²² *ibid.*, p.179-80

²³ *ibid.*, 196-8

expression is never wholly one's in the individual personal sense, since society's praxis may have been noted. But here, in Movement 2, the imagination centres on the social arena. The call is to reflect critically on people's whole 'place' and 'time'. This, of necessity, involves consideration of their social realities and cultural histories. As we note, however, that persons are shaped by their sociocultural situation, it is also important to recognise that as agent-subjects they can reshape their location in place and time.²⁴ This is the hope-full premise which holds excitement and furnishes energy for movement from naming/expressing present praxis to critical reflection on the same.

Critical and historical consciousness is owned together as participants uncover and discover the underlying sources, personal and social, informing present praxis. They not only examine reasons for but also the consequences of what obtains in their reality. This exploration happens through the processes of critical and social reasoning, analytical and social remembering, and creative and social imagining. Critical and social reasoning helps them to identify and to scrutinize their own pre-understandings as well as 'interests, assumptions, prejudices, ideologies' that influence present praxis. Analytical and social remembering opens the way for critical assessment of social histories and biographical data that affect current praxis and their interpretations of it. Creative and social imagining directs their thoughts towards the transformation of self and society. Through such mental engagement in reasoning, remembering, and imagining, participants not only acquire knowledge but also contribute to the construction of knowledge, and to personal and social emancipation.²⁵

The philosophical rationale for Movement 2 is the promotion of 'a dialectic between participants and their social/ historical context.' If a conative pedagogy is the intent, that is, if people are to become what they learn, then their social location is the place in which to learn. For relevant learning, people must pay creative attention to their context. Issues of identity, including the formation of a religious faith identity, are integral to the learning/ knowing process.

All too often, in ecclesiastical circles, the attitude towards people's engagement in critical reflection ranges from indifference to outright opposition. This is so in

²⁴ Groome, *op. cit.*, p.187-8

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.188-90

Montserrat and the wider Caribbean. There the feeling is that specialist theologians and religious education teachers may take part in such activities, but scriptural and doctrinal rote learning seems sufficient for the majority. Groome, reflecting on such attitudes, suggests that they could be ‘expressions of elitism or knowledge control’ possibly ‘mixed with the vested interest of maintaining power over people’s lives and seeing [them] more as ‘dependent objects’ than as ‘agent-subjects’ of their faith’.²⁶

Such antagonism to critical reflection does not make for personal maturation. In Christian faith communities critical learning should be encouraged. History has shown that this does not necessarily happen in the church. As was pointed out in the Introduction, certain aspects of traditional church teachings have discouraged critical thinking among Montserratian Christians. In fact, Third World theologies have noted several instances where the guiding theologies of western Christianity have given sanction to injustice and have fostered uncritical “learning” among people uprooted in space and time.

Movement 2 encourages the asking of questions and there is moral value in this. People can only act responsibly when they have the freedom to think and to decide on what they judge to be right action. More than this, critical reflection, especially when it happens in community, can be a forum in which unanticipated possibilities are revealed. As participants receive a renewed vision for future living, they are encouraged to transcend difficulties in the present. This is the theological justification for participation in Movement 2.

Movement 3: Accessing Christian Story/Vision

The purpose of the third movement is to make accessible to persons expressions of the *Christian Story and Vision* as these pertain to the generative theme of the learning encounter. Having critically interpreted their life situations, texts and contexts, in Movement 2, participants are helped to appropriate meaning from the texts and contexts of Christian Story/ Vision for their lives.

Christian Story refers metaphorically to the whole of Christian tradition from its historical roots to present fruit.

²⁶ Groome, op. cit., p. 193

[It] reflects God's historical revelation through God's covenant encounter with humankind in the people of Israel, in Jesus the Christ, and in the community of Jesus' disciples since then. It is mediated and expressed in myriad forms: in scriptures, traditions, and liturgies; in creeds, dogmas, doctrines, and theologies; in sacraments and rituals, symbols, myths, gestures, and religious language patterns; in spiritualities, values, laws, and expected life-styles; in songs and music, dance and drama; in art, artefacts, and architecture; in memories of holy people, sanctification of time and celebration of holy times, and appreciation of holy places; in community structures and forms of governance, and so on.²⁷

Christian Vision embraces the promises and demands that arise from the Christian Story. In its different aspects the Story communicates the many and varied opportunities and responsibilities that are constitutive of Christian understandings of the reign of God.²⁸ This does not mean that understanding God's reign is an exclusively Christian matter. Indeed, the teaching about God's universal love, a central Christian belief, would be violated by such a suggestion. It is, however, expected that in Movement 3, Christian perspectives be brought to bear upon the group reflections. In the absence of such, an exercise would not qualify as *shared Christian praxis*.

The point is worth reiteration. The rationale for Movement 3 resides in the need for planned Christian learning encounters to intentionally focus on Christian faith practice. The facilitator's own theology of revelation is significant here since the purpose is to help persons consciously and critically appropriate from the wisdom and traditions of their faith.

As facilitator, I was conscious of the need for free expression on the part of participants as responsible persons. Since I firmly believe in divine revelation as continuing experience in human history, group members' statements were valued. Aware of the tendency in the Caribbean to discourage critical reflection, I reacted humbly to SteinhoffSmith's concern regarding the trend in hermeneutic pastoral dialogue for a pastor to serve as the principal theological hermeneut, and for 'all [to] assume that the pastor is the agent of this assertion of superior Christian interpretive power.'²⁹

²⁷ Groome, op. cit., p. 216

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.217

²⁹ SteinhoffSmith, R., 1997, "Dialogue: Hermeneutic and Practical", *Pastoral Psychology*, 45, 6, p. 444.

The real difficulty was how to discourage excessive latitude in discussion. If the scope of discussion were too broad, this could frustrate the exercise through lack of direction. Discussion would be fruitless if it ignored the intention of *shared Christian praxis* and dispelled every notion of normativity. To suggest norms for Christian living based on Christian Story/ Vision is to reaffirm faith in God's continuing guidance and self-disclosure; but it is also to accept that in the symbols and traditions of Christian Story there are already sources of divine guidance and revelation.³⁰ For the research under consideration, one challenge is to effect postcolonial recovery of symbols and traditions for which Christian potential has been denied either through ignorance or deliberate marginalisation.

Movement 4: Dialectical Hermeneutic to Appropriate Christian Story/ Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions

In Movement 4, participants place their present praxis as understood in Movements 1 and 2 in a dialectic encounter with what has been accessed of Christian Story/Vision in Movement 3. The idea is to enable a two-way hermeneutic between these with a view to affirming, questioning, or rejecting aspects of either as these come to light.

The leader's role in this movement is to facilitate questioning activities. Questions arise as individuals seek to appropriate perspectives from Christian Story/Vision. For this, they must consciously attend to, understand, and make judgements about what they detect in Christian Story/ Vision. As they focus on their own interiority, making judgements and assessing their own judgement making, the communal dialogue of testing is enhanced.³¹

The challenge to Movement 4 arises mainly from prior socialisation, where participants as learners and teachers have been understood as takers and givers respectively. In *shared Christian praxis*, persons are expected to go beyond seeking an educator's clarification and to express their own ideas including reservations,

I do not fully support SteinhoffSmith's criticism where this relates to interpretations of Christian traditions. In view of his own statements concerning the complexity of the Bible, it seems reasonable to expect that the trained pastor help the community form its memory of Christian traditions in the light of extensive research. This is the point made by Hough & Cobb in

Hough, J., Cobb, J., 1985, *Christian Identity and Theological Education*, Chico, CA: Scholars Press

³⁰ Groome, op, cit., p. 218-22

³¹ *ibid.*, p.249-52

disagreements and new insights regarding what was accessed in the third movement. While it is arguable that the trained theologian schooled in Christian traditions ‘provides a unique and privileged resource for shaping the experience of a believing community’, s/he must facilitate rather than dominate people’s expressing their visions.³²

Bearing in mind SteinhoffSmith’s criticism referred to earlier, this observation is significant for the Montserrat context where I had previously served as pastor and would play a leading role in the research. Well aware that prior socialisation would result in persons expecting me to be the principal teacher, I assumed the role of learner/ facilitator.

In this regard, the success of Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, used initially with Brazilian peasants, provides inspiration. Its challenge to and effectiveness in overcoming the western banking model of education strongly suggests that critical use of the method of *shared Christian praxis* is a desirable and viable option for ministry in the Caribbean where a pattern of “top down” indoctrination is continuing. Used in Christian Education and pastoral circles, it holds promise for the church’s movement towards the inclusiveness which encourages participation of all believers and which is understood to characterise the reign of God among humankind.

Movement 5: Decision /Response for Lived Christian Faith

Theologically, the final movement is reflective of the hope that participants will choose to respond, through grace, by renewed praxis that is increasingly Christian, understood as congruent with what they accept as the divine intention for their lives. Its aim is decision making – interpreting just how to live out Christian faith in the world.³³

The forms of decisions taken can be varied, involving combinations of cognitive, affective or behavioural categories. Persons may decide at the individual personal level and concerning individual personal or social activities; or the choices can be made communally and have interpersonal, social and/ or political implications. What

³² Schreiter, R., 1985, *Constructing Local Theologies*, London: SCM Press, p.18

Hough, J., Cobb, J., op. cit., p.83

³³ Groome, op. cit., p.267

the group decides in Movement 5 is influenced by the selected theme(s) and contents of the reflection among other factors.³⁴

Because the research undertaken here aims at the articulation of theology, the primary emphasis in decisions is a statement of the learning derived. But authentic decision making at Movement 5 is unlikely to be exclusively cognitive. Behavioural and affective dimensions are important since learned Christian faith is lived as orthopraxis. In actualising their faith decisions, persons involve their whole psyche in response to new learning. Notwithstanding the academic intent of the sessions, conviction about and commitment to the shared knowledge derived from the exercises have importance for the participants' identity and agency as God's people in the world.³⁵

If movements 1 through 4 are seen as a progression in conation or development of wisdom in a community of conversation, movement 5 prompts participants to self-consciously apply the accrued wisdom and to choose what is humanising for all. That recognition of what is humanising is possible follows from the underlying theology of revelation. *Shared Christian praxis* begins with present praxis because it assumes God's self-revelation in people's historicity. Going further, people's renewed choice and deliberate efforts at doing God's will bring them "closer to God", that is, renewed praxis represents a heightened source of ongoing revelation.³⁶

Jesus' statement in John 8:31-32 'If you live according to my teaching, you are truly my disciples; then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free' supports the belief that divine revelation occurs in the context of people doing the will of God. This assumption is one basis for method in liberation theologies.

Rationale for Selection of Methodology

As noted earlier, the researcher's own life and thought is reflected in interpretive biases that supported the selection and informed the application of this methodology.

The ethnographic method is deliberate in seeking to understand perceptions of the Other. The direct involvement of those whose life situation is being researched was

³⁴ Groome, op. cit., 267

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.267-8

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.272

vital to preventing the study from becoming a researcher's monologue similar to much academic research that has been viewed with scepticism by those being investigated. Failure to access directly the collective wisdom accrued from the community's experiences of disaster would have been a serious omission. *Shared Christian praxis* with participants involved as *agent-subjects* avoids this pitfall. Its philosophical presuppositions allow for the Other to play a leading role in informing the research. Such congruence notwithstanding, significant methodological adjustments, as explained in the section immediately following, are justified. As Sandelowski notes, success in qualitative research means using

approaches that both meet our aesthetic need as inquirers and fit the purposes of studies and, then, refining them in ways that do not violate any of the rules or spirit of qualitative work.³⁷

Locally resident active female and male members of Christian congregations as well as those on their fringes participated in the group sessions that constituted the primary encounters for doing theology. In this way they contributed actively to the research outcomes.

The insistence on active engagement in reflection highlights the significance of people's identity consciousness. In Montserrat and the wider Caribbean, the problem of identity confusion is all too real. As a Caribbean theologian, I take seriously my ethical responsibility to foster the empowerment of participants in this research process. For this reason, I readily accept the liberation paradigm underlying *shared Christian praxis*. It encourages people's self-expression since it accepts that human experience teaches and that life's lessons, if affirmed, have the power to transform.

Theologically, this translates to a belief in God's continuing revelation and in the existence of humans as subject-agents within events of God's self-disclosure. The revelatory impact is appreciated further as human beings engage in their own deliberate reflection on their present action in the world.³⁸ In affirming research participants as teacher-learners, the process may well boost their search for transcendence.

³⁷ Sandelowski, M., 1995, "Qualitative Analysis: What It Is and How to Begin", *Research in Nursing and Health*, 18, p.371.

³⁸ Groome, op. cit., 159-64

Since persons are authentically human both as individuals and as members of particular groupings, there is wisdom in an approach that celebrates both. Here, *shared Christian praxis* correlates with a womanist viewpoint in that both value and seek to integrate perspectives of individuals and community. Womanists, among black women of diasporal African communities, are deliberate in celebrating their role in community and they emphasize the place of communal activity in pastoral care. This observation is well illustrated by Lorraine Dixon who examines a number of pastoral theological contributions from the African diaspora. These pay attention to both the private-personal and the social-political and maintain a place for the individual and community in giving and receiving pastoral care. Among peoples of African origin, the concept of communality is prominent. It is rooted in African philosophical ideas concerning the harmony of the individual to the whole of natural and spiritual world, to God and the universe.³⁹ An essentially corporate praxis coincides with black women's approach to healing for the community.⁴⁰

This is the point explained by Lartey who writes:

The focus of healing ...then is the relationship between and among persons whose intrinsic worth is to be found through the network of spiritual and familial relationships in which they are embedded. With regard to African and Caribbean contexts ... all of life is both sacred and secular. These beliefs are expressed most clearly in rituals which are meant to foster and enhance harmonious relations between humans and the unseen world of ancestors, gods and spirits.⁴¹

Thomas Groome's placement of pastoral care and *shared Christian praxis* across the broad scope of the church's ministry promotes a holistic, communal approach to pastoral ministry. This could make for more clarity in identifying and better stewardship in using the pastoral resources of worshipping communities such as are found in Montserrat. The method also takes into account particular historical issues such as the culture of land and its political manifestations, features which can inform a pastoral theology.

³⁹ Dixon, L., 2000, "Reflections on Pastoral Care from a Womanist Perspective", *Contact* 132, p.4-5

⁴⁰ Thistlewaite, S., 1990, *Sex, Race, and God: Christian Feminism in Black and White*, p.21

Gilkes, C., 1998, "Keeping Faith with the People: Reflections on Ethics, Leadership, and African-American Women's Historical Experience", p. 76 in Fluker, E., ed., *The Stones that the Builders Rejected*, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International

⁴¹ Lartey, E., 1999, "Pastoral counselling in multi-cultural perspective", p.25, in Lynch, G., ed., *Clinical Counselling in Pastoral Settings*, London: Routledge

Shared Christian Praxis and the Montserrat Socio-Cultural Context

In *shared Christian praxis*, ministry is viewed in the broader context of Christian Story / Vision which calls practitioners to uphold the integrity of faith traditions in continuity with both past and future.

For Groome, the ‘whole Story’ refers to the totality of faith tradition including the present understanding, enactment and celebration of Christian faith.

It is a comprehensive metaphor for all that realizes or reflects the faith of Christian people over time and in our time. Theologically the Christian story is the distillation and symbolic mediation of God’s self-disclosure to this people and their ancestors in faith over time, and how they have attempted to understand it and respond. Sociologically, as with any people, their Story gives Christians their particular identity in faith, binds them together as a community, enables them to make meaning out of chaos, and invites commitment to an ultimate center of value...⁴²

The ‘stories’ of participants reflect their “situatedness”, while their ‘visions’ include reflection on their historical situation, and express ‘their sense of responsibility and opportunity’ as well as their hopes and concerns for the future.

The ‘whole Vision’ speaks of the community’s present and future potential in God.

Vision is a metaphor for the possibilities and responsibilities, the promises and demands that are prompted by the Christian community’s Story...The comprehensive Vision for Christian faith is the reign of God. The ultimate symbol represents a reality we are to begin to realize in the present, even as its completion comes to meet us and draws our future into it...⁴³

Such a view of Christian Story/Vision is helpful in that it facilitates the interpretive task of pastoral theology. It does so by allowing space for diverse cultural situations to enter into dialogue with Christian traditions, without a Christian theology becoming wholly identical to any particular culture.

The situation in Montserrat suggests that indeed, pastoral care theory does need to take seriously both current developments and cultural memories that colour people’s expressions of Christian faith. For example, the decision of so many to stay at home during the eruptions with increasing levels of extreme discomfort, perplexing as that might be, is explainable both in terms of people’s sense of attachment to place and

⁴² Groome, op. cit., p. 113-14

⁴³ *ibid.*, p.114-15

their determination to resist external forces.⁴⁴ Both sources of persuasion are cherished in this poetic commentary on Montserratian response to the UK sponsored relocation scheme for persons choosing to live abroad because of volcanic activity.

You dare to scoff at colonial bribes
To abandon birthright and heritage;
You rejected the pied piping of a shakey scheme
To change this Eden into a mud-flowing dream.
Rather you rooted deep in your love,
Way down deep into the heart of this earth;
And spread your branches of loyalty
From the volcanic gutted rivers to the tormented sea.

You dare to let the hot flows of your righteous anger
Calmly burn all arrogant protests to your vision
To reclaim territories once denied you.
You could not be restrained.
You desire to walk freely the back, front
and side streets of your turf
Was a flaming sword piercing you innermost being.
The call of your propelling past
Was a power too compelling to ignore.⁴⁵

The poet draws attention to the cultural connection between the people and the place that seems to power their sense of belonging. A sense of place and belonging are fundamental to the Caribbean culture of land, as this British human geographer observed.

...the Caribbean culture of land is not based solely on economics but rather one connected with history, ancestry, independence and freedom. The land has a spiritual meaning as well as being of practical importance...

The vast majority of the peoples of the Caribbean have an ancestral memory of the role of the land because they were brought to the islands either slaves from Africa or as indentured labour from India, specifically to labour on the plantations for commodity production.

⁴⁴ Barnes, *The Montserrat Volcanic Disaster*, p 160-3

⁴⁵ White, Y., 2004, "You Dare", p. 92-3, in Fergus, H. ed., *Beneath the Bananas: Poems of Montserrat*, Salem, Montserrat: UWI School of Continuing Studies

For the freed slaves the ownership of a piece of land was a symbol of their new identity...

The importance of land to Caribbean identity can be acute at times of natural disaster, usually a hurricane. In Montserrat the role of land in the constructions of identity, culture and sense of place manifested itself in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo which completely devastated the island on 17 September 1989.⁴⁶

Skelton, in noting the connection of place and people's relationship with the land, posits that

..in the face of external change, traditional cultural relationships may re-emerge as a form of resistance against, and retreat from, the global and a move towards the local.⁴⁷

Even those persons who went abroad justified their decision on the basis of an indestructible connection to their birth place ritualised by the burial of "navel-strings." The navel-string is a symbolic marker of one's belonging. This song is about the rationale given by Montserratians, long term residents in Antigua, desirous of taking advantage of the offer to relocate to the UK.

Darling leh we go home, back home to Montserrat.
My navel-string bury dere everybody know that.
I just check my passport and it still mark British,
Ten years in Antigua but that doesn't change it...
A go look for me package to go to England.⁴⁸

Nothing severs one's right to belong to that place even after its destruction.

My mother managed to save quite a few things like furniture and our clothes, from the fire... Then she said "I saved nearly everything, but one thing I couldn't save- ayou [your] navel-string!"⁴⁹

It is that sense of belonging that strengthened or haunted many as they evacuated treasured places. Community leaders often appealed to people's attachment to place as they rallied a cry for resistance to perceived attempts by the British government to depopulate their island.⁵⁰ There was general resentment against external advice to

⁴⁶ Skelton, op. cit., p.324-5

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 319

⁴⁸ Francis, H., 1996, "Me Package" in *Ultimate Sacrifice*, Montserrat: Unlimited Access Studios. See App. 1.2.

⁴⁹ interview with an adult male- politician, Methodist (February 16, 2004)

⁵⁰ See Davison, P., 2003, *Volcano in Paradise: death and survival on the Caribbean island of Montserrat*, London: Methuen, p. 278, on the islanders' suspicion of a British plan to depopulate Montserrat.

leave the island, even among persons relocating abroad. People were often upset with non-resident relatives and angry with the outside world for suggesting that they were foolish to remain in Montserrat. They considered outsiders unqualified to judge them for their decision to remain at home. They wrote about and sang of their determination to weather the volcanic experience like one of life's storms, and they encouraged one another to make a worthy sacrifice to preserve community. T-shirts appeared with the slogan 'Tough times don't last but tough people do.' It was their intention to live, through grace, for the survival of their country. Below are excerpts from two of several songs produced to encourage the resident community survival on Montserrat.

This land used to be a paradise ...
Not because we covered in ash
We cyan leh we country die...
You gotta keep the faith...stay in de shelter
You gotta like de food...love you and your neighbour
We're in this together so let's be strong
Life must go on...⁵¹

Montserrat, no cry. See the light.
This volcanic situation will end
and we'll rise again...
We won't run and we won't quit
but we'll learn to live with it
if we keep the faith.⁵²

Throughout disaster and turmoil to the cessation and peace not yet in sight, the people expected their pastors to be present with them, helping them emerge as faithful survivors. They wanted to 'keep the faith' as they expressed it, to cling to this guarantee of continued survival.

See also Patullo, P., 2000, *Fire From the Mountain: The tragedy of Montserrat and the betrayal of its people*, Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, p.115-16.

⁵¹ Weekes, E., Cassell, A., op. cit.

⁵² Greenaway, R., 1998, "Keep the Faith" in *Little Island Live Volcano*, Montserrat: Zunky Music Ltd., See App.1.3.

However, when one considers the practical instructions in song about how to ‘keep the faith,’ the political implications show up. ‘We won’t run and we won’t quit’ are clearly expressions of resistance. Unlike other songs such as *Shovelling* which provides a strategy for coping with the phenomenal nuisance of volcanic ash, these compositions presented here represent a defiant response to nature as well as to outsiders who dared to hint at the abandonment of Montserrat. The spirit of resistance had been successfully encouraged after Hurricane Hugo.

I say to de survivors, have a little faith
In time we can work wonders, have a little faith.
In times a wound shall mend.
Let us rebuild again...
No task is insurmountable.
It’s a regional struggle. We can rise from the rubble.
It is by your hand your country will leap forth.
You cannot leave your post now your country needs you most.
Take pride in your land; make it your ambition
to build your country ...Build it back again!

Those who suffer natural disaster, have a little faith...
Even economic disaster, have a little faith...⁵³

Keeping the faith is, it seems, about making a political commitment to the survival of community in Montserrat. It is for that reason that residents must stay in shelters uncomfortable though they may be, or eat foods they would rather not. And all this is presented as part of the communal struggle to ‘love your neighbour.’

We cyan leh we country die...
You gotta keep the faith...stay in de shelter
You gotta like de food...love you and your neighbour
We’re in this together so let’s be strong

Here, theological, cultural and political considerations are intertwined.

In the quasi-religious effort to galvanize a collective resistance against evacuation, the black population’s attention was redirected to historical events such as the Middle Passage and the World Wars in which Montserratians fought on Britannia’s

⁵³ Weekes, E., Cassel, A., 1995, “Have a Little Faith” in *Phat*, Arrow Music Ltd. See App. 1.4.

side.⁵⁴ Revisiting the cultural trauma of slavery and colonialism seemed to aggravate the situation. Much related unresolved anger remains as is evident in frequent “Brit-bashing”. If pastoral care is to fulfil its role as ‘intentional sponsor [of] the awakening, shaping, rectifying, healing and ongoing growth in vocation of Christian persons and community’⁵⁵ in Montserrat it must be concerned to look back at history and the way interpretations of it have been applied or misapplied in the situation of disaster. Groome’s method enables the context to become part of research process. That is the basis for my choosing to use his overall frame.

Crucial Issues Arising from the Research Context

The discussion thus far has given a sketch of the historical, political and cultural aspects of the context of the Montserrat volcanic disaster. It has also outlined some of the theological themes underlying church life in Montserrat. Before we go on to discuss the adjustments in the theological method used for reflection on the situation, I want to summarise, for the reader, the crucial questions which have arisen from the historical, political, cultural and theological context.

Respectful listening to residents’ reflections on the Montserrat volcanic disaster may well clarify answers to the questions emerging out of the historical situation:

1. Who gives pastoral care?
2. What resources does a faith community have to help it to cope in disaster and suffering?
3. How can pastoral care help a community to reclaim hidden or marginalised coping resources?
4. In what ways can pastoral care influence a community for effective stewardship of its caring resources?
5. In what sense does disaster represent challenge to and opportunity for Christian faith expression?
6. How does a caring community exercise a prophetic role where its constituents are seen to be the powerless?

⁵⁴ speech by D. Brandt aired on ZJB Radio to coincide with April 1996 visit of Sir. Nicholas Bonsor

⁵⁵ Fowler, J., op. cit., p.21

7. How can pastoral care in an apocalyptic setting inspire hope in the present and for the future?
8. Of what value is *shared Christian praxis* in situations of disaster?
9. What are its implications for the selection and training of pastors who serve in disaster prone regions?

In its search for clearer answers to the above questions, this research garners historical perspectives that offer acceptable explanations of the problem of the situation. Such elucidation suggests areas for careful consideration during the course of theological reflection which in turn highlights possibilities for a practical response to the problem.

Adjustments to Shared Christian Praxis

As stated before, the decision in favour of *shared Christian praxis* ought not to be taken as a thorough acceptance of its proponent's principles. For this research, four basic adjustments to the methodology were needed.

The first related to the educational intent of *Shared Christian Praxis*. Like Sewart Hiltner who advocated 'religious re-education' on the grounds that education provided an access route to people's understanding of the symbols, beliefs and practices of Christianity, Groome makes a strong case for an educational agenda for pastoral care, especially pastoral counselling.⁵⁶ The need for education is important and the method can be used to this end especially in view of its invitation to address 'the consequences of miseducation'.⁵⁷ This research, is, however, also critical of many of the assumptions that underlie the church's attempts to educate and to re-educate its participants. This study highlights, for example, some of the problems that arise through the imposition of cultural concepts that do not match the local understandings. Should the educational curricula in Caribbean churches continue to revolve around western understanding of Christian symbols, beliefs and practices, the historical trend of domination rather than liberation would continue. It is therefore desirable, as Groome makes explicit, that *shared Christian praxis* does not have to be a straitjacket. His agenda of "educating the laity" was not the intention of the movements in the field. On the contrary, traditional wisdom and other hidden or

⁵⁶ Groome, op. cit. p.415

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 418

marginalised cultural resources have been treated as instructive for the church's ministry, and in particular for praxis oriented theological reflection.

Secondly, Groome's offer of the 'the way of shared praxis' as an approach for Christian group reflection has been challenged by a few theologians. SteinhoffSmith expresses regret that

the hermeneutic pastoral dialogue implicitly requires the devaluation and finally silencing of all voices other than those of authorised interpreters...[and] for Groome, this silencing occurs primarily through his assumption that only Christians participate in and so are agents of shared Christian praxis.⁵⁸

In taking this critique seriously, this research involved as research participants some persons outside mainstream Christianity. Whereas the faith community in Montserrat usually connotes a reference to the active members of Christian congregations in different communions, Rastafarians represent a significant and vocal minority of religious persons in Montserrat. Their Afro-Caribbean religion is generally understood as a movement in resistance to popular Christianity. Their own professions of faith suggest theologies largely in reaction to perceived failures of the Christian Church in the exercise of its ministry. In the context of the study, the contributions of '*rastas*' stimulated the critical moment at Movement 2, and they encouraged discussion about the need to reclaim desirable historical cultural influences for more relevant Christian faith expressions among Montserratians. Notwithstanding the fact that some Rastafarians define themselves as Christian (as indicated at note 29, Chapter 1), the inclusion of '*rastas*' represents a clear divergence from Groome's preferred method.

SteinhoffSmith's concern sounds similar to that of Turner and Hudson who, in reviewing the preaching role of women, call the church to a 'theology of voice.'

If the church recommitted itself to a "voice-centred" theology and mission, [it] would be called to take more seriously the systems and structures that stifle the voices in human community...would be active in opening up dialogue among the communities in which they live. That dialogue would invite and include voices of other churches, racial/ ethnic groups, social agencies, civic organisations...would intentionally engage the silent and invisible persons of the community who have never been asked their opinion about anything. By providing opportunities for discussion and dialogue, the church could assist distinctive persons and groups in the difficult task of listening to

⁵⁸ SteinhoffSmith, op. cit., p.447

each other and learning to value each different perspective. It would tune its ear to the subtle nuances of the distinctive voices of persons, faithfully listening for the truth of God's voice within each.⁵⁹

A third adjustment allowed for the inclusion of generational perspectives which could not, for practical reasons, be accessed in focus group settings. The need to value different perspectives is emphasised by another critic of *shared Christian praxis* and process methods in general. Lartey's contention is that such approaches, in seeking to be interdisciplinary, often fail to take serious account of different perspectives. He states further that

The *process* cycles may overvalue method at the expense of content. They run the risk of superficiality and, indeed, scavenging in various disciplines (including theological ones) in the hope of finding appropriate themes for the reflection stage.⁶⁰

The value of a multi-perspectival approach is noted and the need to reduce the risk of superficiality against which Lartey cautions is recognised. In the field context, therefore, effort was made to listen to the hidden voices in community. The most senior citizens, for example, were encountered in places where they felt most comfortable - at home, at leisure centres, and in pre-recorded audio-visual histories. Similarly, the impressions of the youngest, with no memory outside of the volcanic experience, were entertained. The inputs from these sources, as for other interviewees, were factored into discussions at the group level.

In determining the parameters for research, however, it was necessary to exclude certain categories of persons from participation in shared praxis focus groups. To maintain reliability in the absence of comparable data concerning their current varied social locations, Montserratian survivors (of the volcanic crisis) residing abroad, except the pastors referred to earlier, did not share in these discussions. Focus group reflections involved only persons who continued to live in Montserrat after the destruction of their local communities. The majority had, however, found temporary solace abroad. Only two of the thirty-three participants lived abroad for less than three weeks.

⁵⁹ Turner, N. and Hudson, M., 1999, *Saved from Silence: Finding Women's Voice in Preaching*, St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, p. 135

⁶⁰ Lartey, E., 1997, "Practical Theology as a Theological Form", p. 75, in Willows, D., Swinton, J., eds., *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care: Practical Theology in a Multidisciplinary Context*, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

But Lartey's suggestion that an interdisciplinary study is inherently overly restrictive can be refuted. Pastoral theology is essentially interdisciplinary. Pattison observes a fundamental fluidity in the shape and content of this theological sub-discipline. These features facilitate its role in the dialectic between religious faith practice and contemporary experience. The pastoral theological dialogue must be 'mutually enriching, intellectually critical and practically transforming.'⁶¹ In order to meet these criteria theology must be informed by insights of the clinical, human and social sciences. Interdisciplinary bridges are vital. The theologian does not need to be, and indeed cannot be, thoroughly immersed in every discipline which contributes to useful discussion on questions of ultimate value.

A fourth adjustment was needed for the successful conduct of group meetings. While all five movements are recommended for any given encounter, it became obvious quite early that rigid scheduling would only serve the purpose of expediency. Therefore, the number of movements pursued in any given meeting was adjusted to allow for more thorough discussion when this need was evident. At the same time, persons were left free to distance themselves from any particular matter under discussion whenever they chose to do so. The academic rigour of detecting and analysing the five movements in the whole series of group encounters was mainly the task of the researcher, because although the Montserrat group meetings convened at different times during a six-session period per group, they constituted a series of encounters for reflection about a particular event. This modification made the analytic work even more challenging, but it helped to maintain the integrity of pastoral practice in that participants' existential concerns were not sidelined in the interest of narrow intellectual pursuit.

The refusal to mute discussion at any one movement simply to progress to the next was rewarded. Group members became unselfconscious to the extent that meetings had both therapeutic and academic value. Sometimes discussion changed gear following on reference to a particular issue, theme, or event that evoked anger, tears, or a sense of joy and amazement - something that could not be ignored in the vain hope of recapturing it another day.

Participants felt free to revisit earlier discussions, and to reintroduce issues that, in their opinion, had not been adequately dealt with. On occasion, someone would

⁶¹ Pattison, *A Vision of Pastoral Theology*", p.4

revert to a previous point of view. Also, a member would bring to the group the benefit of her or his further exploration on the matter at home or in community. This worked well for cross-checking information as the same matters were dealt with under varying situations. While Groome makes no specific provision for retracing the steps in a particular reflection, such practice of cross-checking is recommended by Davies as one way of accomplishing reliability in field research.⁶²

The added flexibility that the above four adjustments gave was valuable. At the end of the series of reflections, group members confidently stated that their involvement in the exercises was personally stimulating and that they felt encouraged to engage further in theological reflection.

5. The Research into Pastoral Care in Disaster

Field Research

Observing: assessing the research environment

The field research was conducted in Montserrat during the six month period November 2003- April 2004. The first four weeks served as an orientation period during which I was more an observer than a participant in the field. Obviously, I could not function as a complete observer since I was not a complete outsider, having been part of social networks in Montserrat during the previous twenty-three years. Already accepted on the basis of long-term involvement in the community, the need for immersion in the research context was largely fulfilled. I focused less on “fitting in” and more on studying the whole environment. It was important to examine, in context, those social, cultural and political features which had been the subject of my reflections during the previous twelve months, and to pay attention to omissions on my part. There was also the need to look out for new developments in these areas, which would inform or otherwise affect the research process.

A keen awareness of the opportunities provided is a key ingredient for successful conduct of field research. Of particular concern to me was the issue of participant selection for the groups to engage in *shared Christian praxis*. Well aware of the churches’ institutional procedures for selecting representatives, I quietly sought a

⁶² Davies, op. cit., p. 86

strategy that would be respectful of their politics while at the same time ensuring that the constitution of focus groups was truly representative of the churches' constituencies. I embarked on a strategy for public information to target audiences including those whose church involvement was marginal. In a small society like Montserrat, the researcher's political strategy is important. It is possible to do irreparable damage through an overly confrontational approach and to frustrate future attempts for members of different congregations to do theological reflection together.

The first group event organised for research purposes was a radio programme *Open House* aired on Saturday, November 29, 2003 on Radio Montserrat (ZJB). This weekly programme features issues surrounding local culture. The producers and hosts kindly consented to my using the show as a forum to inform the community about the research project and to solicit the involvement of persons. The response was overwhelming. Some persons telephoned to commend the project, expressing their view that it was important for the residents of Montserrat to share their experiences - successes and failures - during the volcanic eruptions, so as to help others who endure similar disasters. Other persons made contributions by suggesting questions to be raised and issues to be explored. A few persons actually offered their services as group leaders, recorders and participants.

Before the programme was aired, the idea seemed to me a novel one. I was to learn that it was not original. A consultant group commissioned to produce a housing strategy for Montserrat, and working during 1998-2000, had already listed 'the public radio station with wide listenership' among opportunities to take its strategy forward. Interestingly, the same group had similarly identified 'a tradition of self- and mutual-help' and 'talented musicians capable of delivering social messages' - two features that have been referred to in the previous chapter.⁶³

During the first month I noted new community movements, some of which would prove valuable for research. They included:

- The initiation of a Youth Parliament. In preliminary discussions (February 2004) with the members elected as representatives by the youth of the community, I was able to hear directly the concerns of youth and young

⁶³ Lumsden, F., 2000, "Housing: The Way Forward" , Government of Montserrat: Montserrat, p. 3

adults. They referred to experiences during the eruptions and shared their criticisms concerning the social, economic and political management of the crisis. They also shared their personal needs and what, as representatives, they felt were the greatest current needs among young people. Additionally, I visited the youth groups in the different churches in February and March. In these meetings my role was principally that of a listener / observer, but I was called on frequently to answer queries about the research project itself.

- The development of a new recreation centre at Look Out for senior citizens. It is the first such facility available since the evacuation of the southern and eastern areas of the island. I was able to interact with senior citizens as they met for leisure activities. In an unstructured setting, some elderly persons felt free to share their thoughts concerning life in Montserrat before and after the onset of volcanic eruptions.
- The presence of support groups among men and women. One women's support group responded to the radio programme by offering to participate in the research project. This group comprised of women from different Christian churches provided a testing ground for the selected methodology. I was able to conduct pilot sessions with them and confirm that *shared Christian praxis* was a workable methodology to be followed with focus groups in Montserrat. On learning that a women's group was participating, two men's groups enlisted. They met jointly, and like the women's group, youth groups and senior citizens, furnished information that was fed into the discussions of focus groups using *shared Christian praxis* as a theological method. The meetings of women's and men's groups were led by trained facilitators. I have included in Appendix 4 a copy of my correspondence to these two group leaders. It includes a list of possible themes for discussion. These were derived from the interviews and meetings I had already participated in.
- The completion of a participatory poverty and hardship assessment for which several persons were trained as facilitators or had been involved as participants in focus groups.⁶⁴ Their involvement in this project was what

⁶⁴ Jobs, K., Jones, S., 2001, "Making Ends Meet: A Participatory Poverty and Hardship Assessment of Montserrat (PPA)-July 2000", The Development Unit, Government of Montserrat

stimulated some persons who listened to the radio programme to offer assistance with the research into pastoral care.

During the activities to mark the celebration of St. Patrick's Week 2004, further opportunity was provided for me to observe and to be part of community events. Two of these were especially useful:

1. The *Slave Feast*, dubbed 'a day for celebrating our cultural heritage; a day when we celebrate the first attempts of our slave ancestors to break the bonds of slavery; ... Come and celebrate with us at the *Slave Feast*...the fun of reliving our African and Irish heritage.'⁶⁵ and
2. *Voices of Our Senior Citizens*, an audiovisual exhibition featuring adults ninety-three years and older, who were able to recall and confidently share their recollections about Montserrat life in general.

Interviewing

A total of forty-five interviews were conducted in Montserrat in early 2004, most of these being held in February- March. Recorded sessions with elderly persons at the Look Out Recreation Centre and meetings with groups of men, women, and youth are not included in this number. Interviewees belonged to one or more of the following categories:

1. pastoral caregivers serving on behalf of the church (laity and clergy)
2. caregivers from the wider community (NGOs, Social Welfare and Health sectors)
3. political directorate - including disaster response management personnel
4. scientific community (professionals serving local, regional and international agencies)
5. the arts (creative writing, drama, song, music and dance)

Verbatim presentations of interview portions appear in this research report. These are labelled according to the category to which the interviewee belongs. For example, CH refers to the head of a church or to the most senior clergy member of that communion while CL designates a church appointed lay leader. CC is the

⁶⁵ Willock, R., 2004, "St. Patrick's Day Slave Feast", *Community Diary*, ZJB Radio, Montserrat

designation for a community caregiver while A indicates that the interviewee is an artist. To facilitate reading, the codes for interviewees will be given as the presentation of data proceeds.

Figure 3 indicates the relative participation of the above categories in interviews conducted. It takes account of the fact that an interviewee may belong to different categories.

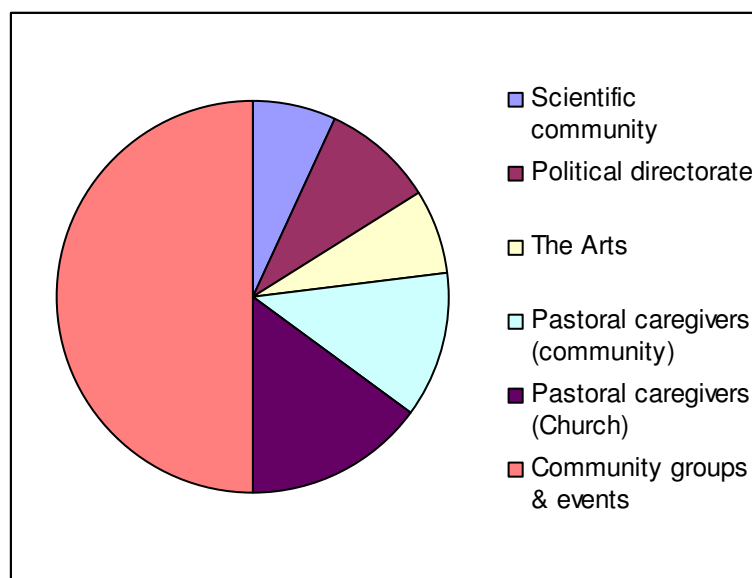


Figure 3: Interviews

Only one request for an interview was unanswered despite repeated efforts to make contact with the potential interviewee. In this case the meeting was sought with a manager in the Health Department. However, information was made available by the agency concerned.

The location and time for each interview was chosen by the interviewee. This was done to mitigate any power advantage, real or perceived, held by the researcher. Most persons selected their offices or workplaces, while a few retired or unemployed participants requested that they be met at home.

All interviews involved open-ended rather than standardised questions being asked. There were, however, situations when the interviewees expressed preference for

specific questions. In these cases respondents were invited to share their recollections of the eruptions, their personal losses, what they judged to be the greatest challenges in the situation, their coping methods and resources, their assessment of social and cultural strengths/ weaknesses in the community, and their assessment of the church's delivery of pastoral care.

The interviews furnished data for describing the research environment. Like the observations described earlier, they were part of an exploratory phase that served the purpose of the researcher's understanding the community climate rather than presenting a forum in which to empathise with persons participating in interviews. For me personally, it was important to establish this condition since it was natural for members of the community to perceive my role solely as that of pastor and counsellor. I was also cautious about my capacity to manage pastoral and academic roles in combination in the research setting. In fact, I was afraid that the first role, if pursued in the field, would supersede the second rendering research invalid in an academic sense. In most cases, however, respondents were comfortable in sharing without seeking support or affirmation from me. There were instances, though, when an interviewee was overwhelmed through the reliving of traumatic experiences and it was necessary for me to offer pastoral support. In two cases, respondents specifically requested that I spend some time after the interview to pray with them.

Shared Christian Praxis Groups

The selection of participants involved negotiating between recognised members of the institutional church and others who did not necessarily consider themselves "good enough" to be its representatives. It was not unusual for invitees to describe themselves as "unfit" because their lifestyles did not conform to, or suggest acceptance of, official church doctrinal positions. One challenge in constituting the groups was to ensure that they were representative of the communities affected by the church in its exercise of pastoral care, and to do this without losing the support of church leadership. There was the likelihood of officially selected participants forcing what has been described in some circles as a "contingent discourse" in which they defend their institutional affiliation, the activities and pastoral support of their churches. It was desirable that participants, whether or not they were actively involved in church, be prepared to express their views and, where necessary, be critical of church and community practices influencing the delivery of pastoral care.

The strategy to achieve this “representativeness” involved invitations to member churches of the MCC and an appeal made as part of the radio programme referred to above. The heads of churches were informed that this appeal would be made. Additionally, I visited Rastafarians in their usual “liming” places to explain their involvement would be an asset to the research. The critical role to be played by “marginal” informants has been documented. They fall into the category of persons who become ‘more aware of the assumptions and expectations of their own society, often because they flaunt them or fail to fulfil them.’⁶⁶

Thirty-nine persons enlisted as participants. This represents the combined total of those registered through the heads of churches as well as persons who made direct contact with me to indicate their interest. Six of those enlisted were unavailable at the times decided on for group meetings. The scheduling of meetings was done in consultation with prospective group members. Three groups were constituted, each agreeing to meet for forty-five minutes on Monday, Wednesday or Sunday for six sessions during February - April 2004. Meetings actually convened over a nine week period to allow for St. Patrick’s Week of activities, Holy Week and Easter observances. The groups, subsequently referred to as SXP1, SXP2 and SXP3 comprised eleven, thirteen and nine participants respectively, in addition to the researcher who attended all sessions.

The three groups each included a cross-section of the Montserrat community and represented a mix of gender, age, and educational qualification. Persons were of varying socio-economic status and variously affected by the volcanic situation, some having lost their communities of origin while others continued to occupy their pre-volcano residences. Together, they represented all the churches of the MCC and the Rastafarian community. The profiles of group members are given in Appendix 2. Apart from the researcher, no member attended every meeting of her/his group. No meeting was aborted on the basis of non-attendance and there were two meetings held with only four participants including the researcher. The transcript of one such meeting, the first meeting of SXP3, is given in Appendix 3. My comments are included.

The final shared praxis session, which was videotaped, included a mix of members from the three groups. This was because the videographer who had offered his

⁶⁶ Davies, op. cit., p. 79

services during the radio programme could fulfil that promise only on a Saturday. Participants later indicated that for religious or other reasons, regular Saturday meetings would not have been convenient.

The initial focus group meetings lasted for forty-five minutes as planned and the researcher pursued her agenda to streamline discussions once a *generative theme* was selected. While there was no deliberate attempt to impose any theme for discussion, for my own direction, I had compiled a list of possible themes drawn from the concerns and issues voiced in interviews and community group meetings. A diagrammatic representation of the scheme of selecting themes is given in Figure 4. It includes the five community sectors listed above as well as a sixth category 'Community Groups & Events' which accommodates feedback from the wider community - the elderly, women's and men's groups, youth groups including the Youth Parliament, and community events. The more frequent the convergence of an issue at Area C (circle) the more likely it was to be selected. The concern here was to address the question of validity since the same issue arising repeatedly in different contexts could suggest its relative importance to the community. Sensitive introduction of anomalies would be at the discretion of the principal researcher.

This schema represents the first step of a plan to forge a conversation among the various sources contributing to the research. By bringing the voices heard in the wider community into the communal reflections, the researcher started to negotiate the intra-cultural and inter-cultural dialogue which is vital to the search for relevant theological perspectives. The conversation is described diagrammatically in Figure 5.

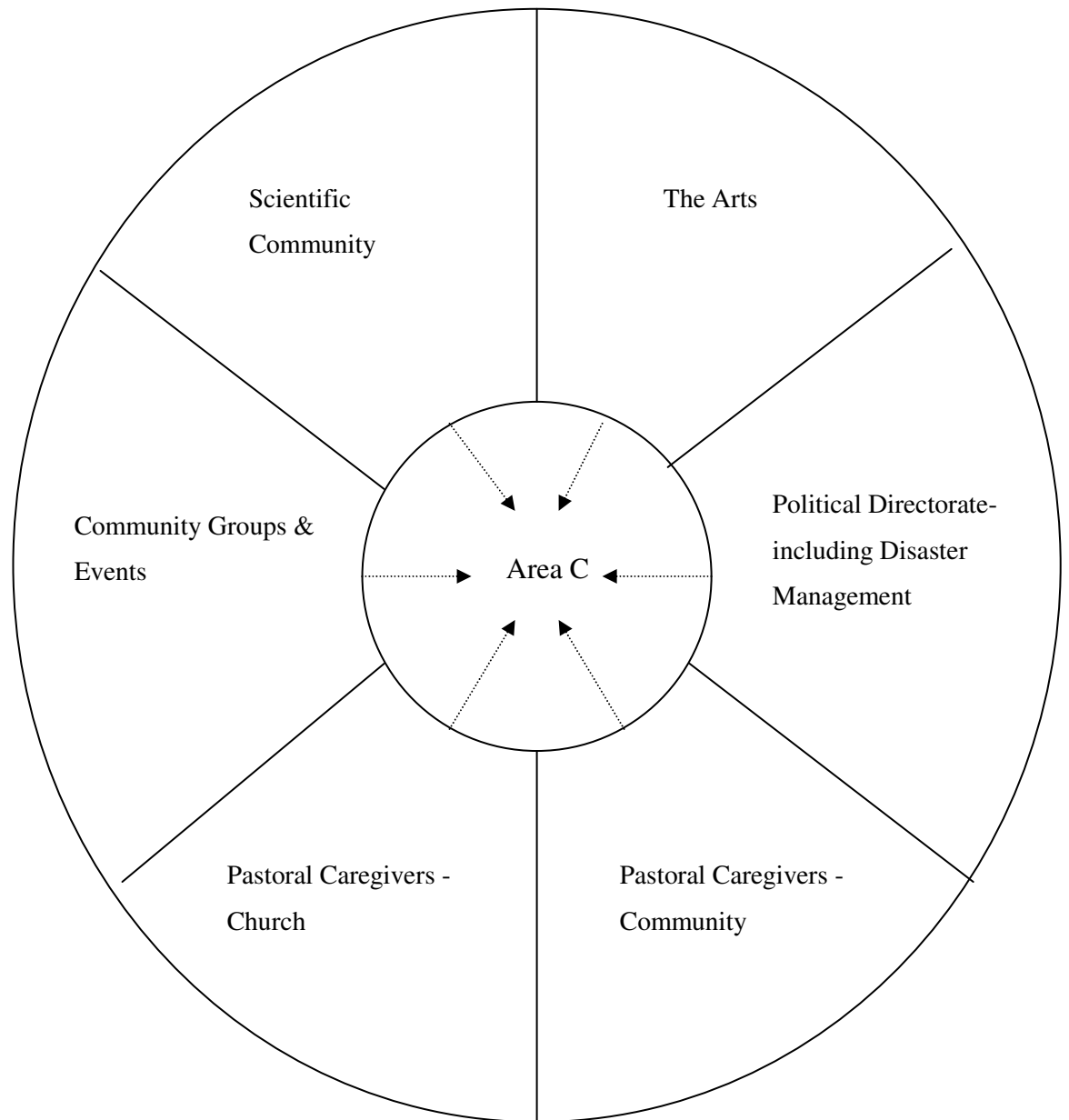
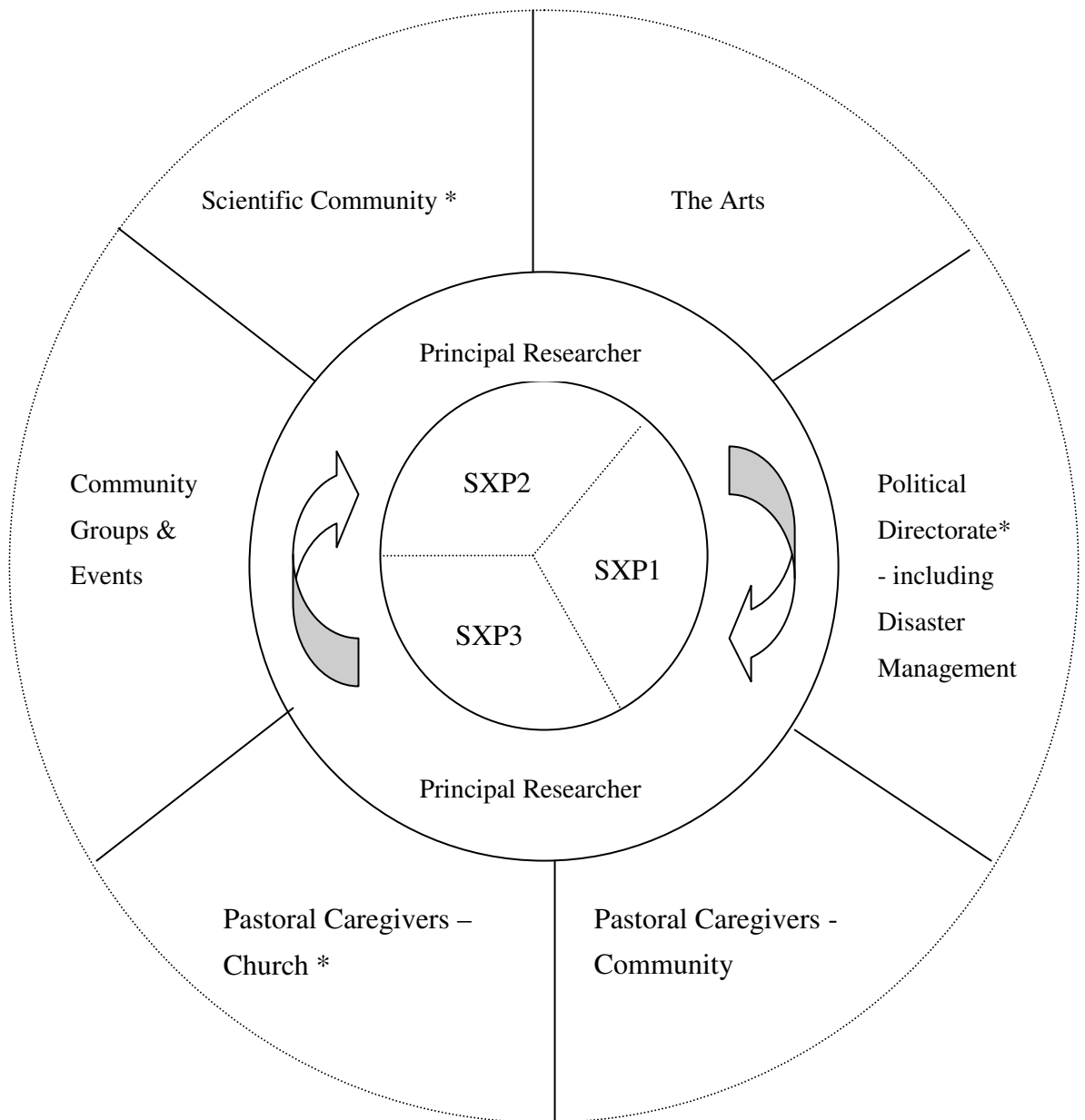


Figure 4: Selection of Themes for Principal Researcher's Preparatory Work



* external voices included

Figure 5: The Conversation

The idea of entertaining previously identified themes might seem to contradict my assertion that Groome's requirement of 'democratic leadership' of *the Focussing Activity* is a useful one. It should not be seen in this light. Prior reflection on issues could enhance the researcher's preparation for focus group meetings and result in better stewardship of the opportunities that group meetings afforded. If the focus groups were truly representative of the community, then it was to be expected that the same or related themes would arise in their discussions. This is precisely what occurred. What I had not anticipated is that several previously identified themes would arise in a single group session; and this happened on nearly every occasion. Clearly, management of sessions in which several of these themes were generated proved extremely difficult, not the least because they came spontaneously in response to the symbol I had selected.

For symbols to start the *focussing activity* there were songs documenting experiences during the volcanic crisis, photographs of different related scenes, poems expressing thoughts and capturing emotions in the varied volcanic setting, newspaper articles, volcanic products such as pumice and charcoal, and even statements made in earlier focus group meetings. Someone once said 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' My experience in leading these meetings suggests that any one symbol can evoke innumerable responses, especially in a situation where the need persists to address people's concern to share their experiences.

In my pursuit of a disciplined academic approach to the research, I offered the type of leadership I judged necessary to keep discussion focussed on a particular theme. In the process I realised that I was violating the very freedom of *agent-subjects* that I had pledged to uphold. Not only were the first two meetings overly structured as a result of enforced streamlining, but the duration of sessions was similarly affected. After curtailing discussion for the first three meetings so as to keep within the forty-five minute time frame, I discovered that much insightful reflection continued after the group sessions. At first, I was hesitant to listen to any discussion on the research subject among *shared Christian praxis* group members outside of their particular group setting.

Upon further reflection regarding the groups' extended meetings after the 'research sessions', I recognised my own tendency to polarise between academic and pastoral roles. My fear, I believe, stemmed from the fact that I was overly concerned about the need to step back and appraise the research setting. Notwithstanding my own

affirmation about the worth of human subjectivity, I had embarked on a futile search for objectivity in the given situation. It was therefore necessary for me to review my role as a leader in the focus group sessions. After the fourth meeting (SXP1 2nd session) I listened to the discussion that had become routine after the group session was over. There was far more depth to the reflections that went on there. For the *shared praxis sessions* that followed, I therefore entertained discussion on whichever theme engaged the speaker's reflections, conscious that the rigorous application of the methodology of *shared Christian praxis* for each theme in turn would be my responsibility during subsequent data analysis.

In so doing, I had adopted an approach similar to that of grounded theorists. This dissertation does not present grounded theory in the strictest sense as explained by its proponents. It seeks nonetheless to present theory drawn from data systematically collected and analysed in the absence of a pre-conceived theory. The investigation was, admittedly, launched in response to my suspicions concerning the delivery of pastoral care; but as to what practical adjustments in pastoral care were called for, only the data would reveal. It is therefore not surprising that a number of the principles, techniques and tools applied here are common to the methodology for grounded research.

The Analysis

Chapters Six and Seven detail the analysis of issues that arose in field research. The key concern was to locate the analytic discourse within the historical setting from which it issues rather than to categorise the faith claims and beliefs that it reveals within a pre-existent theological framework. The following observation is significant.

... qualitative research can no longer concern itself with discovering truths which are unmediated by the situated use of forms of representation.⁶⁷

During the final phase of analysis it was necessary to move consistently between my current interpretations and the expressions of research participants on which these interpretations were based. In that sense, the final product is a created one in which the primary research sources, though evident, are interwoven with textual

⁶⁷ Silverman, D., 1993, *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, London: Sage, p. 197

contributions and other viewpoints. The weaving together of these was part of the analytic task.

Methodological questions have been raised concerning the construction of ethnographic research since the presentation of one's understanding of another's social reality cannot be avoided. Because written products are generally designed to promote particular perspectives, the researcher's understanding is uniquely influential in that regard. Davies notes that this observation is important, but maintains that the critical mind does not have to

reject the ability of ethnographic research and its products to reveal much about the social world simply because these products are deliberately crafted.⁶⁸

At any rate, the interpretivist approach to inquiry into Montserrat's social reality understands the latter as a fluid construction. It is influenced by constantly changing factors that determine people's interaction with their social world. For this reason a wide pool of interviewees were engaged to reflect the broad spectrum of Montserratian life. Additionally, prior reports on ethnographic research projects were consulted to give as balanced a description of the context as could be hoped for.

To facilitate the constant comparison of field data from the three focus groups, computer software (NVivo) was used. Theoretical sampling for data began with the transcript of the first meeting of each group: that is, the transcripts were the raw documents from which data was assigned into theoretical categories, or coded at 'nodes'.⁶⁹ There was considerable overlap in the categories identified during the coding of the first three transcripts. These were compared and then streamlined into ten nodes representative of the classification which resulted from coding these documents. This yielded a coding template for all SXP transcripts so that comparison of issues arising from the groups was standardised. The template for coding documents is summarised thus:

1. Theological Thinking - suggesting participants beliefs / reflections arising from three subcategories - Bible bases, Personal positions, Church connections

⁶⁸ Davies, op. cit., p. 214

⁶⁹ Strauss, A., Corbin, J., 1998, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Second Edition, London: Sage, p. 113-4

2. Cultural Connotations - indicating cultural influences whether local or otherwise
3. Social Situation - depending on speaker's social location
4. Political Praxis - referring to governmental / social policies of local government and to Montserrat –UK relationship
5. Caribbean Connections - mentioning relationship with the wider Caribbean
6. History Hooks - revealing influence of historical events (sometimes forgotten events)
7. Crisis and Commotion - describing emergency and crisis situation
8. Hindsight Helps - reflecting subsequent thought on the matter
9. Maroon Mention - explicitly stating *maroon* or otherwise showing reverence for marronage tradition
10. Definitely Different - contradicting other positions; a space for anomalies

Doing this exercise early in the analysis was one measure towards ensuring that the reported patterns were actually occurring throughout the data and not just in a small selection of documents.⁷⁰

Subsequent to the organisation of this classification system, all data classified was marked according to the nodes listed. Sometimes a word/ phrase/ sentence was placed into more than one category but hardly any case arose for which the data did not fit. This may be explained in part by the presence of the residual node “Definitely Different.” A state of theoretical saturation was reached.⁷¹

By the stage of classifying the third set of transcripts, the process of coding was repetitive, with the recognised categories appearing frequently, often several times per document, indicating the need for a new level of analysis beyond this theoretical comparison.

The next step in the analytic sequence was to note interrelations among the existing categories, that is, to effect a more systematic comparison between them. First attempts to link document segments (words/ phrases/ sentences) from the different

⁷⁰ Silverman, op. cit., p.100

⁷¹ Strauss & Corbin, op. cit., p. 143

groups coded for “Theological Thinking” revealed that there were markers it shared in common with every one of the other nine categories. This suggested correlation between categories 2-9 (and sometimes 10) and category 1.

In the process of comparing and linking documents I became so familiar with the statements and voices of SXP participants that the computer software began to serve more as a database than as a tool. Having observed correspondence between category 1 and the others, I reflected on the opinions and ideas that emerged from the group discussions. Engagement in such reflection was done first without reference to auditory or visual material. It was only after ideas crystallised that I returned to the audiotapes and transcripts to check the accuracy of my recollections. I had essentially “learned” the audio-recordings and associations between group conversations seemed to happen naturally.

It was then time to ask deeper theoretical questions, but I discovered that for clarification of ideas, it was more useful to follow my silent reflection, observing linkages between the categories than it was for me to study the properties and dimensions of categories I had previously recorded using computer software.

My decision not to use software analysis tools actually helped as I was able to concentrate all my faculties on the data, even becoming acutely aware of personal biases that seemed to be provoked in the process. Through mental processing of emergent ideas I engaged in the logical method of *shared Christian praxis*, beginning with the focus group meeting that seemed to communicate the concern in my current focus most effectively. Once I had identified the transcript with which to start, other recordings including interviews were brought into the conversation. No computer software was employed in analysis at this phase of conceptualization. At this stage of reflection, it was the mind’s interpretive thinking working with the support of the researcher participants’ contributions which had stimulated the thoughts.

In my account of data analysis in Chapter Five, I present the transcript from a focus group discussion on an issue from which theological reflection will proceed. A statement of *present praxis* always derives directly from the text. Subsequent movements also reflect the text but additionally the other sources which inform the reflection on the theme. In each case, reflection represents an attempt at synthesis of ideas from different sources. This is true for both Chapters Five and Six.

However, in Chapter Six, the discussion theme for a reflection did not necessarily arise verbatim from a transcript, but rather from any segment of the conversation represented in Figure 5. This was done to achieve a higher level of reliability in the overall selection of reflection themes presented in the research report. While all issues reflected on in Chapter Five were valid, as indicated by the intensity of discussion and reflection, many other important concerns had been encountered in the field. For some of the themes in Chapter Six, the focus group reflections were not as intense as they were for matters raised in the previous chapter, but these concerns recurred with greater consistency in the records of interviews and the SXP discussions. In other words, the themes discussed in Chapter Six cover a broader spectrum of community concern. What seemed initially to be one person's point of view was repeated in a range of sub-contexts and demanded attention. The conversation (Figure 5) in Chapter Six attempts to do this.

The transcripts of group discussions are generally long enough to indicate the discussion context, the flow of ideas and the extent of participation by group members including the researcher. Through communicating some of the group dynamics, the documents suggest the discussion procedure, and the reader can form some judgement as to the actual level of spontaneity in sharing. Attempts have been made to present concordance as well as disagreement or differences in perspective; but since transcripts were obviously selected to illustrate the themes being reflected on, that criterion for selection took precedence. Unfortunately, some very illustrative interview material had to be omitted for ethical reasons. Statements presented in the dissertation are given verbatim. Instances arise where inclusion of certain illustrative but sensitive material would have violated confidentiality. However, there was usually enough data to communicate the thought being developed at a particular point.

In general, this research seeks answers to specific questions arising in the disaster situation, and involves the analytic thinking essential to theological reflection on these particular issues. Underlying it, however, is a holistic rather than a rationalist-reductionist approach to knowledge. Chapters Five and Six cannot, admittedly, present the whole conversation which the field research called for. But they represent the beginning of the hermeneutical process which is the essence of *shared Christian praxis*.

Pastoral Care in Disaster: A Theological Reflection

Chapter Three: A Framework for the Review of Pastoral Care

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines some of the critical elements of pastoral care discourse which have relevance for the discussion and analysis of pastoral care delivered in the context of the Montserrat volcanic eruptions. It does not attempt a thorough presentation of the theory of pastoral care, but focuses instead on some significant aspects arising during the course of research. Consideration of these specific concerns includes presentation and critique of related pastoral care literature as well as some indication of the relevance of these concerns for the study. Actual cases that clearly illustrate pastoral omissions and failures will be given in the next chapter.

The Research in the Context of Contemporary Pastoral Theology

Much of the late twentieth century discourse in pastoral theology centred on the need to clarify its theoretical bases and to revise pastoral practices accordingly.

Theoreticians and practitioners have sought pastoral care approaches which respond to the opportunities and challenges of contemporary society, value the insights gained from modern clinical experience, and effectively balance these with the utilisation of classic pastoral resources of Christianity. These resources include its liturgical, biblical and other narrative traditions as well as early patristic writings.

Recent publications indicate that serious consideration has been given to defining the purpose and procedures for pastoral care. There have emerged a number of suggestions as to possible approaches toward delivering theologically grounded pastoral care that is both practicable in and relevant for today's world. The validity of any suggested approach has much to do with the proponent's understanding of the evolving nature of pastoral care, its relationship to the life of the individual and community, and its placement within the broader framework of God's activity in the world.

One significant contributor to this discussion is Elaine Graham who is also concerned to 'take seriously the challenges of the contemporary world.' She emphasises the need for culturally sensitive pastoral practices while avoiding a common tendency to equate the call for classic pastoral resources with a return to

orthodoxy. In the context of postmodern suspicions of the orthodox as a product of rationality, instrumental in maintaining an overly clerical and hierarchical emphasis in Christianity, it seems that orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy should guide the current search for relevant pastoral resources. Graham senses that need and states explicitly:

I have already committed myself to a particular model of theological formulation and reflection by identifying cultural experience and social trends as valid and legitimate sources of Christian concern and Divine revelation.¹

In agreement with Graham's statement regarding the place of cultural experience and social trends, I have selected a model that values the historicity of participants engaged in this pastoral theological reflection. The research itself reveals that people's whole situation informs their theologising. That became increasingly clear as I analysed the field data. As mentioned in Chapter Two, my initial search for categories arising in the setting yielded ten, labelled as:

1. theological thinking
2. cultural connotations
3. social situation
4. political praxis
5. historical hooks
6. Caribbean connections
7. hindsight helps
8. definitely different (anomalies)
9. crisis & commotion
10. maroon mention

Further analysis showed that, in reality, category one 'theological thinking' is influenced by the other nine. The same may be true for any one of the ten but since the aim here is the recognition of theological perspectives, we focus on how this

¹ Graham, E., 1996, *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*, London: Mowbray, p.3

criterion is affected by the others, that is, how one's theology is informed by the totality of one's situation.

Shared Christian praxis, as a model for theological reflection and articulation, respects the "situatedness" of humans. It requires research participants to think critically about their place in history and to bring this into dialogue with the history of Christian faith without presenting that faith as an end in itself. For God represents both beginning and end.

The chosen theological method emphasises present faith with its linkages to past tradition to underscore its significance as a component of Christian Story/Vision. The 'whole vision' is an ever widening sphere which, according to Groome's explanation, also allows for input from cultural experience and developments in society as suggested by Graham.²

As a way of doing ministry, *shared Christian praxis* pays careful attention to issues of context, not least the location of pastoral care within the broader context of Christian faith practice. This chapter notes first the place of ministry, pastoral ministry included, within God's reign for all creation. Viewing ministry as part of Christian Story/Vision facilitates an examination of the nature and purposes of pastoral care. These are discussed using *shared Christian praxis* as a literary framework and with reference to literature published during the last thirty years. The literature review provides a forum for critiquing pastoral practices in the Montserrat disaster situation.

2. Pastoral Care in the Ministry of the Church

The Context for Pastoral Ministry

Thomas Groome locates pastoral care within Christian Story/Vision and offers a broad definition of the former in terms of the four main tasks of the church's ministry, namely its kerygmatic, community building, worship facilitating, and serving functions.³ *Kerygma, koinonia, leitourgia and diakonia* all represent, for

² Groome, op. cit., p. 113-4

³ *ibid.*, p.301

The author's explanation of the term 'Christian Story/Vision' was presented in the previous chapter. See p. 48

him, dimensions of pastoral service to be offered. What he suggests, then, is really an inclusive framework for describing and reviewing pastoral care. It is as inclusive as Fowler's definition, one which appreciates the scope of pastoral care processes to be considered especially where the demand comes from a community facing disaster and requiring the church to summon all its resources to help persons cope in that situation.

. ...pastoral care consists of all the ways a community of faith, under pastoral leadership, intentionally sponsors the awakening, shaping, rectifying, healing and ongoing growth in vocation of Christian persons and community, under the pressure and power of the in-breaking kingdom of God.⁴

The above definition speaks to the place of pastoral leadership, the diverse and dynamic nature of pastoral care, its integration within the whole of Christian ministry, its relevance for individual and community, and its essential nature as service to God.

Writing from a Catholic perspective, Groome begins his survey of Christian Story/Vision with first century Christianity characterized by functional diversity in ministry that required the participation of all baptized persons in the faith community. Critical of movements that contributed to a diminution of ministry, he observes four aspects of change responsible for the de-motivation, disempowerment, and disqualification of persons for the service of the church in the period leading up to the Second Vatican Council. The demise in universal participation of Christians came with the development of ministry that was increasingly clerical, sacral, hierarchical and exclusive. The Post-Vatican II focus on the nature and mission of the church understood as 'the people of God' or the 'community of Jesus' disciples' facilitated a renewed approach to ministry exercised by its baptized followers, gifted by the Holy Spirit and commissioned by the church to serve God in the world.⁵

Groome deserves credit for not acclaiming his tradition's current position on designated ministry since it retains that Tridentine⁶ dimension of exclusivity in requiring maleness and celibacy as criteria for acceptance into the priesthood. On

⁴ Fowler, 1987, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p. 21

⁵ Groome, op. cit., p. 313-26

⁶ related to the Council of Trent (Tridentinus), Dec. 13, 1545- Dec. 4, 1563. For decisions, see *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 14, 27-9

theological grounds, he insists that the local, public and global contexts of ministry call for a more participative and interdisciplinary approach. The proclamation of God's universal love assumes global concern. Monotheistic belief, if understood as affirming one God for all, is suggestive of a public context for ministry. By implication, it pre-empts a separation into private and public, secular and sacred, and demands the integration of faith and life.

Groome's expressed conviction is that ministry at its best is keenly aware of the historical opportunities in the given context, and serves as a corrective to all that represents a 'thingification' of people whether through sexism, racism, class bias or otherwise. He does seem to have detected an ecclesiology at variance with the fundamental theological propositions of the church. Here, the words attributed to Jesus can be instructive: '... if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.'⁷ For the delivery of pastoral care which upholds the integrity of human persons, the integrity of the delivery system needs to be addressed.

Some resources useful for maintaining the integrity of pastoral ministry derive from the church's classic traditions while others may be identifiable in other cultural milieu. Contemporary Christianity must intentionally explore its varied situations in order to retrieve or to access those under-utilised features which can help the exercise of contextually relevant pastoral practices. Where pastoral care takes its whole environment seriously, it is more receptive to both the opportunities and challenges that issue from past and present experience.

The idea of Christian Story/Vision as having horizons extending into past and future accommodates the necessary dialogue with formative cultures, while at the same time it seeks to understand how the current social and political developments appeal to past events and provoke crises of meaning for today. It may be argued that the invoking of past traditions hides nostalgic longings for the outdated and impracticable; but openness to both past and future really does allow for a more transformative vision for Christian pastoral care. Postmodern perspectives tend to focus on a current crisis in values. Yet shifts in values often involve revaluation of resources from the cultural past. In that sense, history does tend to repeat itself. Effective critique of people's reclamation and revaluation past history requires a model of theological reflection that encourages its practitioners towards mental

⁷ Mk. 3:25, NRSV

engagement in the processes of social reasoning, remembering, and imagining. This is one of the promises of *shared Christian praxis*.

Shared Christian Praxis: an approach to ministry

Shared Christian praxis represents a reflective mode, a creative orientation, a “faith-full” attitude, a communal engagement, an approach to ministry that Groome defines as:

a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God’s reign for all creation.⁸

He contemplates ministry that is incarnational, involving persons as ‘agent subjects’ conscious of their identity and agency in the world.⁹ In that vein, ministry (pastoral ministry included) must pursue the intent to affirm, to empower, and to educate those involved. ‘Each function of Christian ministry has its formal purpose but how it is carried on has faith education consequences.’¹⁰

Shared Christian praxis recognises the educational value of theological reflection for ministry in general. Practitioners learn from what they do as they do what they learn. David Lyall’s perspective is worth noting.

While arguing for an intimate relationship between belief and practice, we must also note that such a relationship is not uni-directional. While practice is undoubtedly shaped by belief, it is also arguable that pastoral practice itself can help us to understand more fully other aspects of the life and work of the church. The ‘*pastoral paradigm*’ can have an integrative function in relation to much of the life of the church.¹¹

For Lyall, the integrative capacity of pastoral ministry is one aspect of its integrity. What then determines the choice of *shared Christian praxis* rather than ‘pastoral care as an integrating paradigm’ for structuring the ensuing review of the ministry of pastoral care? Certainly, the decision is not a determination that the other proposition is invalid. The writings of Lyall who has broad experience in the discipline of

⁸ Groome, op. cit., p.135

⁹ *ibid.*, p.9

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.297

¹¹ Lyall, D., 2001, *Integrity of Pastoral Care*, London: SPCK. p.21, italics mine

Practical Theology constitute an important resource for the discussion of pastoral care as holding together the whole work of the church. It is worth noting here though that while he affirms the integrity of pastoral care as (1) as a form of ministry, and as (2) deriving its theological integrity from the bible, he does not spell out in detail the third aspect of pastoral care's integrity, that is, its integrating role in the life of the church. He rightly insists that 'much could be written about what happens when we look at worship, preaching, education, social action and mission through a pastoral lens'.¹² Charles Gerkin writing from the viewpoint of chaplain, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisor, pastoral counsellor, pastoral care theorist and professor, also presents pastoral care as that multidimensional activity around which the life of Christian community revolves.¹³ So did Sewart Hiltner who pointed earlier to the caring potential of the whole scope of ministry - preaching, teaching, administration, worship and liturgy. Pastoral care is that which correlates the work of ministry.

The first reason for my choice is this. From a practical standpoint, the literary work of Thomas Groome, recognised as a significant contribution to the philosophy and theology of Christian religious education, represents, for me, something closer to an "outsider's perspective". Also, given my pastoral experience in Montserrat where I personally experienced trauma similar to that faced by others, I have chosen what, in my situation, presents a more "objective" approach. During my exploration of theological methods, Groome's method encouraged me as a reflective practitioner, elucidating aspects of my own subjectivity. While the minister's recognition of his or her own subjectivity is invaluable for pastoral service, it is useful in the research setting to balance this with an approach that critiques that subjectivity along the way.

Already, it seems to me, a pastor, that pastoral care is the "life blood" of the church's ministry. Like Lyall, I believe that pastoral care can have a powerful integrating function in the church's whole ministry. It offers a useful paradigm, but not the only one available for reviewing the ministry of care. In using the method of *shared Christian praxis* rather than working from the position of 'pastoral care as an integrating paradigm', I am, as the researcher helped to view ministry as a whole from another perspective. Groome's method, therefore, forces me further in being critical of my own assumptions. The issue of my agency does present a challenge in

¹² Lyall, *Integrity*, op. cit., p. xvii

¹³ Gerkin, C. V., 1997, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Nashville: Abingdon

this research, and the ethical responsibility is mine to recognize and to admit this. The idea is not, however, to maintain the illusion of total objectivity, for that serves no useful purpose. Much useful research has been conducted that depended initially on anthropologists being able to assume an insider - outsider role. For Montserrat in particular, one need only consider the contribution of Lydia Pulsipher (at first an outsider only) in the area of Human Geography, or the social science research conducted by Vernice Barnes (at first an insider only) into the social construction of disaster, psychosocial effects, coping and interventions to understand this.¹⁴ It would be irresponsible to refute positions arising in the context of theological reflections simply because the leader of the session might happen to share in the prevailing assumptions and beliefs of persons engaged in reflection. The selection of a process method such as *shared Christian praxis* with emphasis on procedural questions, rather than say an overly strict liberation-praxis approach that de-emphasises the need for academic rigour, is an attempt on my part to address the issue of validity.

There is a second reason for the choice. The researcher, who works from within the Methodist tradition with its strong Protestant emphases but was largely formed in Catholic settings, likewise sees value in applying a critique constructed from a Catholic perspective. Browning argues that aspects of disrepair in the church's ministry of care are rooted in the Catholic- Protestant schism of the Reformation. Mention is made of the loss of Judeo-Christian aspects including the penitentials, and the opportunity for emergence of secular controls within the church.¹⁵ While this matter is open to debate, it may be that the recovery of classic resources lies in the reintegration or blending of Protestant and Catholic emphases.

¹⁴ Barnes, V., "The Montserrat Volcanic Disaster", op. cit.

Pulsipher, L., 2001, "Our Maroon in the Now Lost Landscapes of Montserrat", *The Geographical Review*, 91, 1-2, 132-42

1999, "For Whom Shall We Write, What Voice Shall We Use, What Story Shall We Tell", p. 258-318, in, Jones, J., Nast. H., Roberts, S., *Threshold in Feminist Geography: Difference, Methodology, Representation*, New York: Rowan & Littlefield

1991, "Galways Plantation, Montserrat", p.138-159, in Viola, H., and Margolis, C., Eds., *Seeds of Change: Five Hundred Years Since Columbus*, Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press

¹⁵ Browning, D. S., 1979, *The Moral Context of Pastoral Care*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, p.64-5, 116.

3. Pastoral Care as (1) Christian (2) Shared (3) Praxis

In this section, the nature and functions of pastoral care are outlined under three headings constitutive of *shared Christian praxis* which has been presented both as a way of doing theology (Chapter Two) and an approach to pastoral ministry (Chapter Three). The assertions and observations presented here form the bases for critique of pastoral care in general and the delivery of care in the Montserrat disaster situation in particular.

Definition

The following definition of pastoral care takes into account its characteristic features.

Pastoral care consists of helping activities, participated in by people who recognize a transcendent dimension to human life, which by the use of verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication, aim at preventing, relieving or facilitating persons coping with anxieties. Pastoral care seeks to foster people's growth as full human beings together with the development of ecologically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane...lives.¹⁶

The definition above takes into account the characteristic features of pastoral care. It recognises the need for transcendence among its participants and is concerned with their formation as human persons. It promotes their holistic development through active participation and by using relevant modes of communication, while emphasising their place in maintaining the integrity of creation.

These aspects of pastoral care will be discussed further, not according to the order in which they appear in the description, but rather as each is illustrative of (1) Christian, (2) shared, or (3) praxis.

(1) Christian: The heritage of pastoral care

Searching for Transcendence

Christian pastoral care recognises a human need for transcendence and helps persons toward that end. Awareness of a transcendent reality has been cited as one feature that makes pastoral care Christian.¹⁷ The dimension of relating to an ultimate Other

¹⁶ Lartey, E., 1997, *In Living Colour*, London: Cassell, p.5, 7-8

¹⁷ Wright, F., 1980, *The Pastoral Nature of the Ministry*, London: SCM Press, p.9

is important for persons who may or may not be overtly religious. It does seem that under distressing conditions people's religious awareness is heightened, thereby affording unique opportunities for pastoral care. Contemporary documentation of the social construction of disaster response is placing a growing emphasis on the observation that people with histories of disaster; strong faith, and religious affiliation are more resilient. Montserrat is a deeply theistic society with a history replete with human induced and natural disasters and Montserratians provide an example of a people who have learned about 'holding on' in faith and simultaneously 'letting go' of cherished possessions and place in the course of survival.¹⁸ Those caring for persons facing crisis must take care not to sidestep their search for transcendence by concentrating solely on immediate needs, pressing as those might be. Illustrations from the Montserrat disaster will show that suffering persons are sometimes more intentionally focused on matters of ultimate concern than they are on the difficulties of their present situation.

Lartey's definition above highlights 'a transcendent dimension to human life', and it places emphasis on community. It assumes shared ways of living that promote 'the development of ecologically holistic communities'. Persons, individually and corporately, access the transcendent through reliance on practical wisdom, symbols, rituals, myths, and other practices that hold spiritual meaning for them. For Christians, some of these correspond to the symbols, metaphors and narratives of the Christian faith, what Groome calls Christian Story/Vision.

I use Story and Vision as metaphors to symbolize the whole historical reality of "the Christian faith" and the demands and promises that it makes upon the lives of its adherents. In sum, the Christian Story/Vision includes God's self disclosure to the people of Israel as mediated through the Hebrew scriptures; it has its highpoint in Jesus the Christ, who Christians believe is the "heart" of God's Story/Vision for humankind; and it symbolizes the Christian tradition since then and the living faith to which disciples are called in the community of Jesus.¹⁹

Jesus the Christ is at the centre of Christian faith claims. Human history is understood as the story of God's relationship with humankind. For Christians, the

¹⁸ Barnes, V., "Letting Go' but 'Holding On': Ten Years into the Montserrat Volcanic Eruption", article to be published August 18, 2006 in Autumn 2006 issue of *Magnet, Magazine of the Methodist Women's Network*, Peterborough.

¹⁹ Groome, op. cit., p. 138-39

climax of this narrative of divine self-disclosure, present in part in the Hebrew scriptures, is found in the Christ. Christian ministry then, roots back into Judaism as it looks forward to fulfilment in God's reign. It accepts that both Hebrew and Christian traditions help to define the tasks of pastoral care and to influence its ways of searching for and experiencing transcendence.

But the church has tended to undervalue the contributions of unfamiliar symbols and to focus on the traditionally accepted ways of communicating Christian faith ideals. For example, in reminding Christians of their moral and ethical responsibilities as followers of Jesus the Christ, the resources employed are generally those inherited from Judaism. Practical theologian and ethicist Don Browning makes a strong case for pastoral care to take seriously the function of moral guidance and in this regard, to learn from Judaism. He observes that this faith, the cradle of Christianity, is an ethical type of religion practiced in the context of the Torah with its demand for human action to effect worldly transformation.²⁰ He stresses the significance of a human-divine covenant as a symbol which connotes privilege but also implies the responsibility of human covenant partners to be engaged in a mission of pointing the way to a moral God.

Browning's argument for the moral dimension in pastoral care seems to be wholly supported by ethical rational standards that can be traced back to priestly, scribal and Pharisaic traditions of moral leaders whose primary tool was 'rational knowledge of the law, its casuistry, and everyday applications.'²¹ He presents Jesus as a moral teacher according to the tradition of the Scribes and Pharisees.²²

Robert Katz, who integrates religious and psychotherapeutic perspectives and identifies relevant movements in both Judaism and Christianity, writes:

Rabbis have not always sensed the connection between the traditional sources and the actual needs of individual Jews. They have proceeded to wholesale the teachings of Judaism without paying attention to questions that agitate the hearts and minds of their contemporaries.²³

²⁰ Browning, *The Moral Context*, op. cit., p.42

²¹ *ibid.*, p.45-46

²² *ibid.*, p.49-51

²³ Katz, R. L., 1985, *Pastoral Care and the Jewish Tradition: Empathic Process and Religious Counseling*, Browning, D., Ed., Theology and Pastoral Care Series, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p.24

Katz' criticism is valid outside of Jewish circles for approaches such as Browning's. Browning does not, it would seem, pay sufficient attention to issues of contextualisation which are of paramount importance for contemporary practitioners of pastoral care.

The Christian tradition since the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth / the highpoint of divine revelation in Jesus the Christ has intersected frequently with others. Christianity has inevitably interacted and exchanged with cultures encountered. It could not otherwise have achieved its global reach. It seems reasonable, then, that pastoral theology should continue to explore the range of 'verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication' employed by Christians in particular cultural contexts in their search for transcendence.

Christianity's declining ability to offer meaning in the context of changing western cultures and the increasing trend of participation in a range of spiritualities may well be related to a de-emphasis on transcendence in Christian faith practice.²⁴ It would do well to seriously consider the varied contributions that derive from the Christian faith's intercultural exchanges, and to appropriate communication modes that have impacted positively on the worship life and spirituality of Christian peoples. The re-affirmation of Christian faith in post-volcano Montserrat, for example, can be enhanced through the church's acceptance of certain "unofficial" 'verbal and non-verbal, direct and indirect, literal and symbolic modes of communication' that persons have meaningfully exercised in their search for transcendence.

The Place of Symbolic Communication

Pembroke agrees with Browning that pastoral care needs 'a solid moral infrastructure' but he questions the exclusive involvement of rational processes of moral inquiry. The intuitive and affective, he insists, must play a part.²⁵ Elaine Graham is also critical of the de-emphasis on the symbolic and ritual religious dimensions in determining what is morally desirable.²⁶ In order to clarify this issue,

²⁴ Drane, D., 2000, *Cultural Change and Biblical Faith: The Future of the Church. Biblical and Missiological Essays for the New Century*, Carlisle, UK, and Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, p16-7

²⁵ Pembroke, "Presence and Shame", p. 7-8

²⁶ Graham, *Transforming Practice*, p.88

before continuing further with this textual review, let me present a live text from the research setting.

My experience as a pastor working in Montserrat suggests that situations do exist where an understanding of persons' moral decision making requires the caregiver's capacity to recognise and reflect on symbolic communication within the community of concern. I use an experience from the volcanic setting to illustrate where, in spite of what could be describes as fatalistic resignation on the part of persons now deceased, someone's dream becomes the basis for family breakdown. The situation is complicated further as certain burial rituals cannot take place. One sibling bears the brunt of blame although he has given his utmost to prevent a catastrophe. The names of people and places have been changed.

Francisco and Mariella Simpson continued to live in Out-o-bounds Village long after it was officially evacuated. I had already exhausted all forms of reasoning with these two persons, even appealing to Mariella to make good use of her sight which had been recently restored through cataract surgery. I asked her 'Sister Mariella, you don't think the Lord gave you back your sight just so you could let the volcano kill you?' Her answer was: 'Now that I can see, you can leave me. When I was blind, people had to move me from here.' Of course, I could not simply leave them. Their youngest son and daughter, who had both resided in their own homes next door to their parents, were willing to arrange transportation out of the danger zone. There were relatives in the north who were more than willing to squeeze them into the room they had occupied during a previous relocation. We arranged to get them to the north where they remained for some time. Two days before the fatal eruptions, they decided to walk back home and have not been seen since.

The death of the Simpsons signalled the beginning of family squabbles. For the first time, I was contacted by their children living in St. Maarten and the United States. The sister in St. Maarten had had a terrible dream, that their parents had been killed by the volcano, and she shared this with her younger brother. How could he have been so heartless? In her opinion, it was all due to his fault. The young man was distraught. Every time he came to see me there were tears in his eyes. Already he had lost his parents after trying so hard to see to their safety. He would never find their dead bodies to give them a proper burial as life-long Methodists deserve. He could forget all the insults they had hurled at him in his efforts to get them to safety. I remember the day his father yelled at us 'Go! The volcano will have to come right here and cover me. They say that's how God made Montserrat anyway!' Now that the volcano had covered Francisco, who negotiated miles of hilly terrain to walk to his death, his son Kris saw little prospect of a happy life. He had lost his parents, now his siblings. Maybe, he felt, he should have lost his life too.

In the case presented above, my receptivity to information transmitted through symbolic communication was needed for an appreciation of the problem presented. Otherwise, I would have missed concerns that were important for the Simpson family. Mariella subsequently confirmed my initial suspicion that she understood her healing to be more than a sign of divine favour. It was part of her readiness to depart earthly existence. *Now that I can see, you can leave me* was a statement that alerted me to the possibility that Mariella had not viewed the volcanic experience as a personal disaster but as a welcome transition to an afterlife. Francisco's confident assertion that volcanic activity was part of God's creative work in Montserrat suggested that both husband and wife viewed the eruptions from similar perspectives. That suspicion later proved correct.

There was also the issue of a dream which represented, for the family, a powerful means of communication. Similarly, the lack of opportunity for a proper burial was a sore point for Kris, as for his siblings. There is much symbolism associated with pre-burial rites and funerals. Sensitivity to this reality could prove a critical factor in subsequent pastoral care for the Simpson siblings and their families. Family tensions related to the dream and the missing burial could last for generations. While families need not be consciously aware of that symptoms are passed on, the transmission of emotional styles is multigenerational.²⁷

Awareness of the potency of the symbolic is important in every pastoral context. In this African Caribbean situation, it certainly enhances the effectiveness of pastoral care. Lartey mentions 'symbolic modes of communication' in reference to their place as means of giving care. But the communication of care requires first an understanding of the situation and of the symbols of communication in the setting where care is to be offered. This study shows that the research community's art forms hold potential as instruments of hope and healing. It shows, likewise, that land has high symbolic value. Caregivers need an appreciation of these particular cultural elements and their power as symbols. The one who has neither the will nor the means to understand the other is impotent to help the healing or coping process. In pastoral care, it is vitally important to pay attention to how persons feel about any given matter. In an emergency situation when many rely only on their intuition to survive

²⁷ Augsburg, D., 1986, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, Philadelphia; The Westminster Press, p. 183

this is especially crucial. One must be aware of the power of symbols such as dreams to influence their feelings. This is so even when, to the caregiver, there is no obvious rational basis for their feelings and beliefs. So a strictly moral-rational approach (based on Euro-American cultural frames and assumptions) to reviving pastoral care's Christian heritage will not do.

The Place of Emotions in the Search for Transcendence

In the context of the trauma inducing volcanic eruptions in Montserrat, in order for persons to transcend the harsh realities they were experiencing, it was vital for them to express their feelings in helpful ways. Self-expression can have either beneficial or harmful outcomes, depending on the manner and settings in which it occurs. So there was not just a need for people to vent their feelings, but for literal and symbolic ways of giving expression to human emotions through means that enabled persons to move through a painful situation while maintaining their integrity as human persons. To this end, a number of songs were composed and dramatic presentations, locally referred to as "stress busters", were organised. These developments were sponsored by artists and groups who were mostly members of Christian congregations though not acting on behalf of the churches.

The artistic productions, some of which will be examined in more detail later in this dissertation, can be instructive to pastoral care. Used in pastoral settings to affirm human emotive expression, they can help people to understand that they are "like God". If Christian pastoral care presents God as the eternal One, it must also affirm the emotive qualities of this God as presented in the Bible. Otherwise, Lyall's assertion about pastoral care having 'theological integrity located in biblical narrative' does not hold true.²⁸ He observes the encouragement of full emotive expression in biblical care.²⁹ A brief survey of selected biblical sources serves to illustrate that God exhibits a range of emotions such as jealousy and anger, joy and gladness, sympathy and compassion.³⁰

²⁸ Lyall, *Integrity*, p. xvii

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.92

³⁰ The Lord was sorry that he had made humankind...and it grieved him to his heart (Gen. 6:6)...for I the Lord your God am a jealous God (Ex. 20:5). ...the Lord ...will have compassion on his servants (Dt. 32:36)... the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel (Judges 2:20). ...the Lord loved Israel (1Kgs. 10:9) ...he delivered me, because he delighted in me (Ps.18:19). As a father has compassion

Other writers support this observation and call practitioners to review pastoral attitudes towards expression of human emotions such as laughter and anger.³¹ Freire suggests that the tendency towards suppression of the emotions in Christian settings is pursued to the extent of an implied connection between the human body and sin.³² In this regard, Stein's reaction to Oden's call for pastoral care to recover its identity through using classic pastoral resources is worth noting. He is grateful for 'Freud's restoration of the somatic depths and creational continuities of transcendence.'³³ Stein's observation is encouraging for the Montserrat situation where the success of coping interventions was largely due to their capacity to stimulate people's expressions of pent up emotions.³⁴ It is important for me to emphasize that while such exercises involved church goers, they were neither categorised as nor accepted as part of their churches' response programmes.

Recovery of traditions of Christian Story/Vision must address the human need for emotive expression in catharsis as in celebration. The God of the Bible has emotions. Hence current emphasis on narrative theology as is intrinsic to *shared Christian praxis* expects that the telling of personal stories will not proceed apart from recollections often unspoken but recorded through tears and in body language that words cannot express. The words of Pattison are instructive.

It is time for Christian thought to re-assess and embrace all aspects of the emotional lives of individuals and groups. People need theologies that help to affirm incarnate worldly experience rather than to escape or deny it... It may even allow a contribution to world peace; many wars are inspired by a flammable mixture of religious belief and practice that is gained by powerful emotional experiences. Furthermore, this kind of engagement is consonant with central doctrines and images within Christianity. Notions of creation, incarnation and bodily resurrection point to the importance of taking

for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him (Ps. 103:13). ...may the Lord rejoice in his works (Ps. 104:31). God is love (1 Jn. 4:16)

³¹ Campbell, A., 1986, *The Gospel of Anger*, London: SPCK, Capps, ,Lester, A., *The Angry Christian*, London: Westminster John Knox, especially Ch.13, Pattison, *Critique*, op. cit., p. 169-190

³² Freire, P., Faundez, A., 1989, *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation*, Geneva: WCC Books, p.18

³³ Stein, E., 1980, "Reactions to Dr. Oden's 'Recovering Lost Identity'", *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 34, p. 21

³⁴ A prime example is the teamwork of clinical psychologist Carol Tuitt, songwriter Randall Greenaway, and others ("Zunky and dem") who used the written and sung productions *Little Island Live Volcano* which are cited in later this study.

all aspects of embodied human existence, including emotions, very seriously indeed.³⁵

This is a call to adopt a theological anthropology more consistent with the biblical doctrines of creation. This issue will be raised again in the section “Shared: the Corporate Nature of Ministry” where relevant insights from the clinical disciplines are noted.

Christian Story and the Communication of God’s Love

Christian pastoral care finds its place in the continuing narrative of God’s love. It encourages the full development of human persons by helping them to accept themselves as gifted and loved beings created in the image of God. Through viewing the Creator as the source of loving care, people are encouraged to commit themselves lovingly to the divine-human relationship. As they do, their movement towards God and spiritual and moral growth as human persons is enhanced.

Biblical sources present this cooperative pursuit as God’s intention for humanity. The theocentrism which is evident in the Old Testament points to the wider context of God’s care for humanity and the whole of creation.³⁶ Both this theocentric understanding of creation and the Old Testament covenant relationship with its pledges of faithfulness by God and God’s people can be seen as the backdrop against which divine love for humankind is progressively revealed. This love is the reason for pastoral care.

It is vital that Christian pastoral care communicates the loving presence of God as its motivation. Divine love must be understood as the initial source and the abiding resource that enables the human capacity to heal and to grow into fullness. For Christians, the revelation of God’s love for humankind is seen to climax in the Christ event, which, for discussion sake, can be examined under the following four headings:

1. Incarnation
2. Crucifixion
3. Resurrection and the Eschatological Hope

³⁵ Pattison, S., 2001, “Mend the gap. Christianity and the emotions”, *Contact*, 134, p. 8

³⁶ Lyall, *Integrity*, p. 91

Incarnation

As a way of doing ministry, *shared Christian praxis* is incarnational, giving embodiment to faith claims about God's communion with humankind. It pays attention to opportunities in the present situation and encourages persons to address what is not reflective of the divine presence in human history. This element is a requisite for contextually relevant modes of pastoral care.

The incarnation witnesses to the divine taking human form in Jesus. It speaks of God's presence with humankind, what Christians so often celebrate in verse.

Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell
Jesus, our Immanuel.³⁷

God comes down, He bows the sky,
And shows himself our Friend:
God the invisible appears:
God, the blest, the great I AM,
Sojourns in this vale of tears,
And Jesus is his name.³⁸

Lyall sees two important ways in which this belief, God taking human form, informs pastoral care. 'One implication of the incarnation is that the communication of Christian truth is relational and not propositional.' What is said or left unspoken, and the *context* for speaking and listening, are crucial. A faith perspective, one which respects the human search for transcendence, is significant in defining the pastoral relationship.

The content of pastoral conversation has its own importance, but only in the context of a pastoral relationship which embodies the grace and truth of the gospel.³⁹

Christian faith practices ought not to be divorced from the basic understanding that divine grace, the medium for effective caring, is always available since God is ever present among humankind.

³⁷ Wesley, Charles, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing", No. 117, *The Methodist Hymn Book*, 1933, Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, No. 117

³⁸ Wesley, Charles, "Glory Be to God on High", *The Methodist Hymn Book*, No.134

³⁹ Lyall, *Integrity*, p. 96-7

Secondly, an understanding of the incarnation as God's identification with humans makes possible the communication of love within the pastoral relationship as an expression of God's eternal love of which it is but part. This provides a theological framework for understanding why Carl Rogers, in *Client-Centered Therapy* insisted on genuineness, empathy and unconditional positive regard as fundamentals of a healthy therapeutic relationship.⁴⁰

In emphasising the salvation of souls as a central concern, classical Christian tradition also maintained a focus on the proclamation of God's love as the framework for the exercise of pastoral care.⁴¹ Oden observes that the classical pastoral writers always placed human caring 'beyond the microcosmic situation of interpersonal care' into the wider context of divine care.'⁴²

The pastoral tradition has not viewed human care autonomously, as if everything were dependent upon fleeting, changing human initiative. Rather human caring is viewed as energized and embraced by God's own caring for the world.⁴³

In support of this observation he quotes Origen.

God's care, as eternal ubiquitous Knower, penetrates yet transcends all historical reality. This care wells up from eternity. The unending caring of the eternal God for the soul is not limited to this life. Christian care for the soul is not, therefore, to be seen as focused narrowly upon human initiative – so vulnerable and prone to frustration – but as a response to the divine initiative- taking in salvation history. For this reason, God's care of the world cannot be subjected to objective physical measurement which applies only to measurable subjects. (Origen, *De Principiis*, Bk. II)⁴⁴

Indeed, in its presentation of human care as activity that derives from and reflects the love of God, pastoral care contextualises and gives practical meaning to the message of the Incarnation.

⁴⁰ Lyall, *Integrity*, p.97

⁴¹ Pastoral theologians writing in the 1950s e.g. Mc Neil and 60s e.g. Clebsh and Jaekle emphasised this aspect of pastoral care

⁴² Oden, T., 1987, *Classical Pastoral Care: Volume 3 Pastoral Counsel*, New York: Crossroad, p.89

⁴³ *idem*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.90

Crucifixion

Pastoral care needs to help persons understand the forgiveness of sins that God offers through Jesus Christ. The Christ event, in particular the crucifixion, is a reminder of God's immeasurable commitment to forgiving and reconciling humankind. The place of the cross, and all it symbolises, is critical in the communication of God's love. Its significance in pastoral care is not only for proclaiming the divine concern for humanity but also for reminding persons of the human responsibility to accept God's gracious provision of forgiveness and restoration.

The suffering and death of Jesus as presented in the context of a divine work of reconciliation compel us to focus on that flawed side of human nature which tends to destructiveness and which is always in need of repair. Human sinfulness and the guilt that results from sin must be addressed in pastoral care which 'seeks to foster people's growth as full human beings'. If it fails to address the issue of human pain, pastoral care fails. In *The Wounded Healer* Nouwen makes it explicit that pastoral care deepens rather than avoids pain, as it seeks to deal creatively with the depth of the human condition in such experiences as doubt, confusion, guilt, alienation and fear. In this connection, Lyall writes:

Pastoral care which is informed by biblical narrative is one which cannot but be formed by an understanding of the cross. If in the crucifixion of Jesus we see human degradation, individual and corporate, exposed, then there is no aspect of human life which cannot be contained by a pastoral relationship undertaken in the light of the cross...To offer pastoral care in the light of the cross is to do so in a context in which human vulnerability and brokenness can be expressed, contained and transformed.⁴⁵

Williams puts it this way.

Any pastoral care...which cannot countenance the tragic full in the face in all its rawness is not Christian. We have to walk the way of the cross for without it there can be no resurrection.⁴⁶

The reality of sin and guilt, pain and tragedy, remind us that pastoral care is about unearthing the hidden and sometimes unpleasant truths about human nature. But without such discovery, one does not confront the worst in oneself and cannot seek to transcend that.

⁴⁵ Lyall, *Integrity*, p. 101

⁴⁶ Williams, 1997, "Tragedy and pastoral care", *Contact*, 123, 26-31, p. 29

Helping persons to address issues of guilt is undeniably an essential part of ministry. As Campbell reminds us, even guilt has spiritual value since a sense of guilt prepares one to receive grace. Pastoral care, then, can be understood as providing channels of divine grace – helping persons to reach their spiritual potential.⁴⁷

The use of the cross and suffering of Jesus as themes in pastoral care can, however, become problematic, especially among persons who have been made to endure needless suffering. Recent feminist scholarship pays particular attention to how biblicism has been used to the disadvantage of female victims of domestic and sexual abuse.⁴⁸ Reflecting on the data provided by Thistlewaite in *Every Two Minutes*, Isherwood draws attention to texts that condone sexual violence and continue to exercise power over vulnerable women. These women need help in using the Bible as encouragement for self-respect, and in finding alternatives to traditional oppressive biblical interpretations.⁴⁹

One deeply problematic area is the way that Scripture and Tradition have imaged the suffering and death of Jesus. Traditional interpretations have proved to be a gift for abusers of all kinds. Traditional "theologies of the cross" have not only presented us with a model of divine child abuse but also with a strong obedience and dependency model. In an androcentric world this is bad news for women. The supreme example of the suffering of Christ has held many women in abusive situations and has been the pastoral response of many clerics. By ritualising the suffering and death of Jesus, Christian theology has disempowered the oppressed and therefore encouraged the continuation of the cycle of violence.⁵⁰

Similarly, the presentation of the traditional message of sin and salvation can be dehumanising. At the onset of volcanic eruptions in Montserrat, there were clergy persons and highly placed lay members in churches who used the disaster situation to reinforce a message of guilt. As indicated in the Introduction, it was largely through

⁴⁷ Campbell, A., *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, p. 71-2

⁴⁸ Adams, C., 1994, *Woman-Battering*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 107-11, Neuger, C., 1991, "Women's Depression: Lives at Risk", p. 146, in Glaz, M., Moessner, J., eds., *Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press. Charry, E., 1997, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 234. Supportive male voices include Miles, A., 2000, *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p.25-44

⁴⁹ Thistlewaite, S., 1989, "Every Two Minutes", in, Plaskow, J, Christ, C., *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*, New York: HarperCollins, p. 302-11. Statistics presented are from the United Methodist Church's Program of Ministries with Women in Crisis

⁵⁰ Isherwood, L., 2003, "Marriage: Haven or Hell? Twin Souls and Broken Bones", *Feminist Theology*, 11, 2. p.212-3.

the people's own continuing theological reflections concerning disaster that individuals and groups found the confidence to critique traditional teachings about suffering.

It is useful to note Ellen Charry's poignant commentary on teachings which overemphasize divine wrath and correspondingly de-emphasize divine compassion.

...Christians have suffered at the hands of theologians who lost sight of God's respect for us even in the midst of our sinfulness and portrayed God as implicitly approving of our suffering and self-abasement. Those who have interpreted the cross as countenancing suffering as pleasing to God, rather than as teaching human compassion, or who have encouraged God-seekers to hate themselves in order to cajole God into loving them ... have misunderstood God's commitment to creation and respect for us taught by the Incarnation itself.⁵¹

Below, two members of the laity lament this tendency among preachers in Montserrat.

YS: But I still think, also, that in terms of the preached word, again we tap into our psyche from a cultural context. What is said in the pulpit, and how we receive it, because I mean if you are one of the young people or children, and you not particularly forgiving, you don't think in terms of making people feel good, then you're gonna say all the things that will make you feel bad.

YN: Hmm hmm

YW: Right. Some of the preachers do that. All they want to do is make you feel bad. And they say that you sin, and you sin, and you sin, and you sin, and then collectively. If you want to use an example, when we went on that... How are our children and young people supposed to react to that? Because when they keep hearing this, they ask 'what have I done that has become sin?'

(SXP2, March 10, 2004)

In the disaster situation, where persons feel the tragic weight of guilt, where questions of theodicy may dominate their consciousness, caregivers must be sensitive in helping people with issues of guilt and shame. While pastoral care and counselling has inherited a moral and ethical function, its task of promoting wholeness is threatened where an overly moralistic approach is employed.

⁵¹ Charry, op. cit. p. 234

Resurrection and the Eschatological Hope

The resurrection of Christ declares God's victory for the world. Divine love is supremely at work, liberating the entire cosmos towards God's ultimate purpose. The resurrection speaks of transformation in the midst of what is most destructive, death itself. To believe in the resurrection is to assert that transformation in pastoral care is possible through the divine power that overcomes destruction, heals and renews. The message concerning transformation must be brought into focus for persons facing catastrophic losses such as witnessed in Montserrat. When one considers that the volcanic eruptions brought to light the destructive potential of much pre-existing social and political practice, the theme of resurrection, which can stimulate hope and point to possibilities in even chaotic situations, can hardly be overemphasised.

The biblical record goes beyond the physical resurrection, to the ascension of the risen Christ, who through the Holy Spirit, empowered the church in mission. The divine love that climaxed in the incarnation continues to work in the world through the Spirit of Jesus, transforming creation into that which it is yet to be. Through the Spirit of Christ, believers fulfil the prophetic task of challenging injustice and advancing the cause of righteousness which is the goal of ministry. This ongoing witness of Christianity points towards God's end for humanity. It fits into Christian Story/ Vision linking past and future.

The Christian narrative, with its sequence of incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, the coming of the Spirit, and a recital of these in the expectation of fulfilment of God's reign, is a story of hope. Moltmann is convinced that the distinctive contribution of the Christian faith is the hope that it engenders in hopeless situations. He supports a theology of ministry that 'operates out of an eschatological context' and can therefore help persons 'to view things not just as they have been or even as they are, but in terms of the possibilities and potential.'

.. Pastoral care which is 'conformed to Christ' must be conformed to the whole story. We are to show forth the Lord's death 'until he comes'. It is in this context that the pastoral relationship is able to 'hold' those who suffer, underpinned by faith that the words and actions of pastoral care belong to what Bonhoeffer called the 'penultimate', and that beyond the penultimate there is another

‘ultimate’ word which at the end of the day brings healing and wholeness.⁵²

‘Holding those who suffer’ means giving them cause to continue in hope, that is, to hold on. The inspiration of hope is an indispensable ingredient of pastoral care. It is central to the pastoral task.⁵³ In disaster situations with tragedy and loss such as occurred in Montserrat, giving hope or, at the least, helping persons not lose hope, may be all that is possible. But as they are encouraged to hold on in that disaster, where many experienced tragedy and loss, caring was largely about learning to hope. Sociologically this hope suggests new possibilities within the social context and sees alternative definitions of people’s situations.⁵⁴ Theologically, Christian pastoral care, because it operates in hope, affirms the individual who participates through valuing the place of her or his particular story within the broader context of Christian Story/Vision. A Christian understanding of the reign of God with its ideal of true community, the context for fulfilment of human persons, constitute the theological world view within which pastoral takes its place. This understanding must underlie the delivery of care in disaster situations where, sometimes, only hope of new possibilities keeps persons alive.

Summary

Christian implies that pastoral care

- locates human story within the story of God’s dealing with humankind, divine self-disclosure supremely given in Christ
- communicates God’s love and forgiveness as shown in Christ
- reminds persons of their moral/ethical responsibilities as followers of Christ
- celebrates God’s loving care for all creation inclusive of human persons

⁵² Moltmann, J., 1967, *Theology of Hope. On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. London: SCM Press, p. 106-7, 243

This is congruent with the author’s position on the church as transient, an open and imperfect institution which functions as a transition to the Kingdom of God. This theology of the church calls for humility in its approach to the exercise of pastoral care. See

Moltmann, J., 1978, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, London: SCM Press, p.25

⁵³ Capps, D., 1995, *Agents of Hope: A Pastoral Psychology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p.1

⁵⁴ Furniss, G., 1994. *The Social Context of Pastoral Care: Defining the Life Situation*. Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, p. 37

- recognises the need for transcendence among human persons
- encourages health, healing and wholeness of persons
- promotes relationship among persons
- points to the eschatological dimension of the human-divine relationship

Implications for Pastoral Ministry

In any context, the application of *shared Christian praxis* is influenced by understandings of what is Christian. Fundamental to the method, however, is a theology of revelation that reaffirms faith in God's continuing guidance and self-disclosure and in human capacity to encounter and to recognise divine revelation.⁵⁵

This does not undervalue the traditional aspects of Christian Story/Vision but rather clarifies that none of these, even the biblical record of God's self-disclosure, is sufficient to encompass the whole of divine revelation.

Such an understanding influences pastoral care practice in several ways. Four concerns will be discussed below. First, such a theology of revelation calls for an attitude of humility in relation to usage of traditional resources such as the Bible. Secondly, it demands openness in exploring formerly marginalised Christian resources, in particular within the contexts of intra-cultural and inter-cultural dialogue. Interculturality is essential for effective caring in today's world.

Thirdly, openness to God's activity in the world inspires pastoral responses to the prophetic demands and challenges of contemporary society. Finally, humility and flexibility are required for relevant contemporary approaches to traditional pastoral tasks such as Christian nurture and spiritual formation.

The use of the Bible in Pastoral Care

If Christian pastoral care is to appropriate the symbols of Judeo-Christian tradition, checks and balances are needed, since the symbols and metaphors, as well as common understanding of these and the practices they inspired, were developed in the ever changing context of human history. This is especially so when it comes to the use of the Bible, where well meaning pastoral caregivers have sometimes hindered rather than helped those who relied upon them. There has been the

⁵⁵ Groome, op. cit., p.160

tendency, for example, to make use of selective biblical references as prescriptive for particular diagnoses, without due consideration for the personhood of those seeking care. Mention has been made of the need to mitigate adverse effects associated with the symbolism of the cross and suffering for abused persons. This is true for Montserrat with its atmosphere of strong biblicism. When, in 2000, the Royal Montserrat Police Services launched a campaign against domestic violence, the churches' support amounted to the use of their buildings for meetings. Local calypsonians did more to build an awareness of the insidiousness of physical, economic and emotional abuse than did Christian congregations who tended to view the campaign as conflicting with their understanding of biblical statements.

The image of Jesus the divine co-sufferer as used in the womanist tradition of theology can be an empowering motif for those who suffer.⁵⁶ However, slavish adherence to hierarchical, patriarchal influences in the interpretation of passages dealing with social situations, marriage and family life only serve to further alienate persons whose being has been threatened by such unyielding approaches.

There are problems bound up with pastoral care's usage of its positive biblical symbols as well. Take, for example, the concept of covenant. While covenant speaks to the existence of a special relationship between God and humankind, biblical language has been used to endorse an understanding of election that negates the Other.⁵⁷ When one notes the ascent of satellite television as a communications medium for American neo-Pentecostalism, it is not surprising that many Caribbean Christians concur with American Christians in their views concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict or the war in Iraq. These judgements are based largely on their interpretations about divine election. Mention was made in the Introduction of problems arising from a warped understanding of covenant. This is one example of how biblical sources have been used in an unhelpful manner.

There has been some discussion in contemporary pastoral care theory concerning the use of the Bible in pastoral care. For both Lyall and Browning, biblical resources are valued. In validating his historical perspective on pastoral care by reference to biblical sources though, Browning stands in contradistinction to Pattison who seeks to address the Bible's "silent treatment" of the subject. The latter believes that

⁵⁶ See Grant, J. 1989, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, p. 212

⁵⁷ Graham, E., "Pastoral care and communitarianism", p.8

‘pastoral care is largely a product of the post-biblical church.’ He writes about a ‘frustrating peripherality’ of pastoral care in the Bible itself and suggests this as one underlying reason for confusion surrounding its use in pastoral practice.⁵⁸ There is, indeed, an absence of detail in Browning’s extensive treatment of pastoral care in Judaism concerning its function of providing emotional support and guidance in times of crisis. This omission seems to support Pattison’s observation. The latter does, however, value the Bible as an indispensable source of guidance for the formation of Christian persons, and his critique affirms its role in influencing Christian faith praxis.

For the Montserrat context, careful consideration of biblical sources is a requisite for practitioners of pastoral care. There is much reverence in the community for the Bible as a resource from Christian tradition that serves to instruct, to correct, to encourage and to comfort persons in nearly all areas of life. It is almost a truism to state that pastoral caregivers should expect questions or statements about the Bible. It is taken for granted that they (and ideally everyone else) are familiar with its truth claims and promises.

But biblical interpretations are sometimes potentially confusing. Some scientific information given during the community education programmes related to the geological age of the volcano. While offered with the intention of increasing community awareness, this seemed to conflict with biblical sources and may well have contributed to early distrust of scientific advice. The Montserrat situation is illustrative of the concern documented by Pattison for critical use of the Bible in pastoral care.

The Need for Interculturality

Christianity today is as varied as never before. In an atmosphere of diffuse religious and cultural boundaries, societies which once were predominantly overtly Christian are now home to a multiplicity of faiths. In such settings, Christian persons and groups continue to assert their role as bearers of the good news of God’s reconciliation in Christ. Faithful witness in their particular situations requires

⁵⁸ Pattison, S., 1998, *A Critique of Pastoral Care*, London: SCM, p. 106-7. See Chapter 6 for his insightful critique of approaches towards using the bible in pastoral care.

mutuality of respect both within and among Christian communions, and between Christians and the rest of God's people.

Indeed, the majority of Christians today are born into and / or live in cultures that are not intrinsically Christian, at least not in the socio-political sense: today's Christian lives in more than one world. With this in mind, Jon Chung Park presented an imperative for Christians to engage in intra-religious dialogue.⁵⁹ It was essentially an invitation to view faith from intercultural perspectives. For Park, a South Korean, the exploration dealt specifically with dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity. As he physically danced his explanation of the concept of intra-religious dialogue, one question came to the fore. How does today's Christian dance faithfully? The question is important for pastoral care as it seeks ways of being faithful to Christian Story/Vision while at the same time it appropriates useful resources from the varied contributions of human society.

Lartey calls for an intercultural approach that counters the individualistic, rationalistic style of much Western pastoral care. It is not the same as Augsburg's cross-culturalism that places emphasis on the counsellor's 'cross-cultural awareness' but in so doing tends to ignore mutual influences between and within cultures that are seldom if ever monolithic.⁶⁰ Lartey uses a Trinitarian approach to explain the diversity of human experience which must be considered in the delivery of pastoral care.

As the distinct persons of the Trinity, so with the features of our human experience. They can be and often need to be viewed and treated on their own in order to be taken seriously and more carefully attended to. Time and effort for example need to be spent discussing and exploring the nature of the Person of Christ. Nevertheless, the relational character of the three Persons must never be entirely lost.⁶¹

Augsburger's cross-culturalism, then, does not encourage the intra-cultural communication which holds much promise for the identification of pastoral resources hidden in Montserratian society. An important aspect of this research is the examination of spaces within the cultures encountered there. There, as elsewhere,

⁵⁹ Park, J.C., 2002, "Christian Perfection and Confucian Sage Learning: An Interreligious Dialogue in the Crisis of Life", Oxford: *11th Institute of Methodist Theological Studies*

⁶⁰ Augsburg, op. cit.

⁶¹ Lartey, E., 1999, "Pastoral counselling in multi-cultural contexts", p. 24, 29-36, in, Lynch, G., ed., *Clinical Counselling in Pastoral Settings*, London: Routledge

human variety points to divinely purposed creative diversity which must inform pastoral practices.

Promoting Moral Responsibility

It is important in pastoral care to strike a balance between the communication of limitless divine grace and the maintenance of a growing awareness of the moral demands of Christian faith. Otherwise statements about the love of God become no more than pronouncements of “cheap grace.” The expectation that people should participate in God’s reconciling work, symbolised in the crucifixion, implies moral responsibility on their part. De-emphasis on the moral dimension could very well hinder the holistic development of human persons.

David Lyall agrees that pastoral care is not given in a value-free context. While emphasising the need for sensitivity to each individual person’s spiritual journey and advocating freedom rather than prescription in the use of religious resources, he clearly locates pastoral care within faith communities, each one with interpretations and re-interpretations of the narratives that shape it. For the Christian faith, biblical witness records the ‘fundamental narrative’, that of God’s self-disclosure to humans in Jesus Christ.⁶² That narrative presents a moral God and suggests that the formation of Christian persons involves their acceptance of ethical and moral responsibility for doing justice in God’s world.

In Browning’s discussion of Jesus’ application of Jewish law, he states convincingly the need for a moral basis to human life. There would be no hope for transcending in the strict legalism of Judaism in the context of Jesus of Nazareth were there no moral codes to follow in the first place. At the same time, however, he observes that a call to ‘supralegalism’ (which he attributes to Jesus) could suggest ‘unattainable asceticism’ on the one hand or ‘antinomian amoral postures’ on the other.⁶³

While, as has been stated, Browning maintains a strict ethical-rational approach, his survey of the varied sources for the exercise of care from which Judaism offered its universe of meaning to emergent Christianity does remind pastoral care of its moral responsibility. Viewed from a sociological perspective, the Jewish ethos of care found widespread acceptance in early Christianity and provided its plausibility

⁶² Lyall, *Integrity*, p.12, 20-1.

⁶³ Browning, *Moral Context*, p. 49-51.

structures, and the new faith adopted from Jewish law an insistence on social ethical conduct as right conduct. This was carried on in an atmosphere of spiritual discipline, encouraged by the expectation of an early parousia.

If there is anything unique about *cura animarum* in primitive Christianity, it is the combination of spiritual warmth and a structured code of everyday ethical behaviour. Pastoral care proceeded in a mode of ordered spirituality. It was an ordered spirituality placed within the context of Jewish expectation for future reversal of present agonies. This future hope, accompanied by a rational code of daily behaviour, gets to the heart of what was happening in early Christianity.⁶⁴

The combination of ethical instruction and spiritual discipline is significant. It must be noted, though, that where rigid standards of ethical behaviour are prescribed, threats to the individual's personhood often arise. Pastoral care needs to guard against excessive preoccupation with moral concerns that undermines efforts to nurture an instil hope.⁶⁵ This is particularly important where circumstances suggest reasons for diminishing hope such as in a prolonged disaster like the Montserrat situation. Also, an overly moralistic approach can work against the individual who feels alienated as a result of others' lack of understanding of one's particular concerns. As we shall see from Montserrat group reflections presented in Chapter 6 in the discussion on "Dealing with Difference", group-think can become prescriptive and unfair. A "group morality" tends towards dehumanisation as persons are often expected to conform to norms that may be oppressive given the particularities of their situations. One needs to keep a check on the 'inferiority of the morality of groups' as compared to that of individuals.'⁶⁶ This is maintained through constant attention to the spirituality of individual members and of the group.

All too often, pastoral care has failed to confront the offender, especially when that person conforms to group standards of morality and, by default, fail to provide emotional support for the offended. By default it contributes to a cycle of abuse where those who have been wronged come to accept it as normal. Pastoral care, in facilitating the well-being of persons, has a responsibility not to participate in or reinforce, in any way, the victimization process which is part and parcel of the abuse of power. The abuse of power is never morally neutral. It always works to the

⁶⁴ Browning, *Moral Context*, p.54

⁶⁵ Capps, D., 1995, *Agents of Hope: a pastoral psychology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p.92

⁶⁶ Niebuhr, R., 1963, *Moral Man & Immoral Society*, London: SCM Press, p. xii

disadvantage of the abused, and from a theological standpoint, is destructive to the perpetrator.⁶⁷

Pastoral caregivers often holding privileged positions of trust find themselves in situations where they hold the advantage of greater power. Unfortunately, a pattern of abuse of vulnerable persons is often endorsed by the very persons placed to protect them.⁶⁸ Unaware of or unconcerned about power dynamics in personal relationships, they often frustrate the development of those whom they seek to help.

Nurturing Christian Spirituality

Spiritual guidance and the general oversight of Christian formation have long been recognised as pastoral functions. The church has encouraged its participants to grow spiritually through practising “the means of grace” such as prayer, study and participation in worship. This aspect of pastoral care is still important for our contemporary world. One paradox of the postmodern / postchristian formulation is the increasing frequency of individuals and groups of persons who determinedly seek fulfilment of their life stories in the light of traditional Christian teaching. And there are scattered world-wide, persons and groups who choose to pursue their spirituality outside of the institutional setting without opting for secular religion. Many are searching in earnest for something to point them to the transcendent reality that Christians call God; and while faced with the influences of other world religions, they have chosen to identify with the grand Judeo-Christian narrative. In such a context where people are ever so conscious about their spirituality, be it overtly religious or otherwise, the exercise of Christian pastoral care has its place.

Pattison expresses regret that

Pastoral care has all but ignored the discipline dimension of the tradition of the *cura animarum* which emphasises growth, positive action, education and aspects of specifically religious spirituality...⁶⁹

The value of spirituality for holistic development has been recognised outside the religious arena. Burke and Miranti are among those who emphasise the pivotal role of the spiritual in the integration of physical, emotional, social and intellectual

⁶⁷ Poling, 1991, *The Abuse of Power: A Theological Problem*, Nashville: Abingdon, p. 99-110

⁶⁸ Adams, op. cit., p.107-11, Miles, op. cit., p.25-44, Poling, op. cit., p.11-12, Thistewaite, op. cit., p. 302

⁶⁹ Pattison, *Critique*, op. cit., p.68

dimensions of every human being.⁷⁰ They list seven advantages for the professional counsellor's use of spiritual interventions.⁷¹ While they do not describe a specifically Christian setting, they recognise each human person as a spiritual being with deep spiritual needs to be met if personal integrity is to be achieved and maintained. Obviously, Christian pastoral caregivers and counsellors working in Christian pastoral settings will address spirituality using Christianity's resources whether overtly or covertly doing so.

For Lyall, the universality of religious experience and the diagnostic and therapeutic value of a person's spirituality and religious experience require serious attention.⁷² Pastoral care given within the context of Christian Story/Vision seeks meaning within that framework. Whether or not obvious use is made of traditional resources such as prayer, caregivers need to know that a person's inner turmoil is often summed up in the psalmist's question: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?"⁷³ In such a case, there is justification for interpreting the journey towards wholeness in terms of the divine offer of reconciliation: "...through him God was pleased to reconcile ...all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."⁷⁴

In Montserrat, where the sacred /secular dichotomy remains unresolved, and where, in spite of the secularising influences of modernity, participatory religious experience continues to be highly valued, it is both desirable and beneficial that the spiritual dimensions of pastoral care be emphasised. Without this, pastoral response would be skewed toward attention to feeling and emotion. A truly holistic approach requires balance between the cognitive / evaluative and affective aspects.

The maintenance of standards of ethical conduct, then, is an indispensable function of Christian spirituality. We have seen that from its inception, Christianity played a role in the formation of persons who share the church's vision for life in the world.

⁷⁰ Burke, M., Miranti, J., 2001, "The Spiritual Dimensions of Counselling" in *The Handbook of Counselling*, London: Sage, p. 603

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 605

⁷² Lyall, *Counselling*, p.82-5

⁷³ Ps. 22:1 NRSV

⁷⁴ Col. 1:20 NRSV

This pastoral function corresponds to Lartey's requirement for *the development of ecologically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane lives*.

Spiritual development of persons in communities necessitates the adoption of norms and standards. Moral formation is an important aspect of one's spirituality. While flexibility rather than prescription is desirable for effective, sensitive caring, there must be some definition of normative behaviours if persons are to exist harmoniously in community. Failure to maintain minimum normative standards is destructive to corporate life. It is suggestive of, indeed may encourage disrespect for others and may well be synonymous with disregard for God who invites us to reflect the divine character through love of neighbour.

There are normative principles which define the nature of right relationships in the world. When a person acts against these principles, harm is caused to others. In this case, the guilt one experiences has an ontic character; it cannot be reduced to the level of 'anxiety-induced bugbears' associated with trespass against parental and societal taboos. This genuine experience of guilt Buber refers to as existential, and the structure of being created through human relationships he calls the human order-of-being. When there is injury to the order-of-being, one is obligated to attempt healing.⁷⁵

In pursuing its role in spiritual formation, Christian pastoral care is called into the business of healing and transforming relationships that do not reflect the love of God. Healing is facilitated as injured parties find the support they need to effectively challenge the wrong done to them. It is a prophetic task that applies to the realms of intra-personal, interpersonal and social-political relationships. This aspect of pastoral ministry takes seriously the need for transformation of societal structures that 'hinder people's growth as human beings together'. Gerkin, Stuart, Faber and E. Graham look to the Old Testament prophetic traditions and cite biblical warrants for such transformative pastoral ministry.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Pembroke, N., 2002, *The Art of Listening: Dialogue, Shame and Pastoral Care*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 111-2.

⁷⁶ Gerkin, 1997, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Nashville: Abingdon, p. 24-5; 1986, *Widening the Horizons: Pastoral Responses to a Fragmented Society*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, esp. Chapter 5; Faber, H., 1981, 'The Prophetic Role in Pastoral Care', *Pastoral Psychology*, 29, 191-202; Stuart, E., 1992, 'The Prophet as an Image of the Pastor in the New Testament', *Contact*, 109, 24-30; Graham, E., 1990, 'Pastoral Theology, Feminism and the Future', *Contact* 103, 2-9. Gerkin has written extensively on the significance of social factors in shaping the consciousness of persons, their communities and the world. He argues for increased emphasis on Old Testament sources other than the Wisdom and Pharisaic traditions, such as the priestly and prophetic heritage for pastoral care. He decries the 'assumption ... that the principal Old Testament ancestors of pastoral care practice were the wise men and women: those who gave moral guidance to individuals.'

In the pursuit of prophetic ministry, issues of guilt will arise in the personal and political domains. We have seen that sometimes guilt and anxiety are induced through insensitive pastoral practices that need correction. In these situations the task of pastoral care is the provision of emotional support and guidance through ‘helping activities ...which aim at preventing, relieving or facilitating persons coping with anxieties’. However, as Pembroke states explicitly in the quotation above, where guilt derives from wrongdoing it must be confronted.

As mentioned earlier, Christian pastoral care must pay urgent attention to its approaches to the exercise of power. It is a current concern at the interface of Christian spirituality, theological sensitivity, and faith praxis.⁷⁷ It is an issue that will surface as we reflect on and analyse experiences from the Montserrat situation. In Chapters Four and Five, we encounter situations where individuals and congregations continue the prevailing patterns of abuse and fail to challenge societal injustice.

Shared: the corporate nature of ministry

Lartey’s definition of pastoral care emphasises its communal dimension.

Pastoral care seeks to foster people’s growth as full human beings together with the development of ecologically holistic communities in which all persons may live.

Several pastoral care theorists agree on this emphasis and advocate pastoral care characterised by corporate activity, variety and lay involvement. Lyall observes the corporate and varied nature of biblical care in both Old and New Testament traditions.⁷⁸ For him, the integrity of Christian pastoral care is based in the corporate life that finds its “raison d’être” in the Christian story.

Pastoral care has its own integrity rooted in the life and worship of the Christian church, a community of faith which finds its identity in the events surrounding the story of Jesus of Nazareth.⁷⁹

Commenting on the royal priesthood mentioned in 1 Peter 2:9, Macquarrie attributes ministry to the whole church. ‘...this ministry and priesthood belong to the people as

⁷⁷ Brueggeman, W., Parks, S., Groome, T., 1986, *To Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly: An Agenda for Ministers*, Mahwah, N.J. : Paulist Press, p.2

⁷⁸ Lyall, *Integrity*, p. 90-3

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. xvi, *Counselling*, p. 32

a whole. It is understood collectively'.⁸⁰ Lambourne sees lay participation as having paramount importance in pastoral care which, for him, is a thoroughly corporate activity.⁸¹ Fowler, whose inclusive definition of pastoral care was cited earlier, considers the community of faith as 'ecology of care'.⁸² Lyall, who, as we have seen considers the community is of paramount importance for care that qualifies as pastoral, adds the facet of the communal context for the reflective aspect of ministry and theology. He values Schoen's insight on ministers' need for 'reflective conversation' with each other.⁸³ All practitioners, lay and ordained, need each other to do theology and renew their ways of caring.

Reflective practice must go beyond reviewing what happens within the confines of formal pastoral ministry in congregational life. It involves pastoral caregivers and their congregations sharing with other institutions that seek to promote human development. In this regard, pastoral care should gladly learn from other areas such as the psychological disciplines which offer insights to enhance the work of ministry as learning is shared between disciplines.

A description of Christian ministry as shared ministry may seem superfluous when one takes into account the communality that is inherent in biblical Christianity.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. From the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ...As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ... If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Macquarrie, J., *The Church and Ministry: Ministerial Functions*, Birmingham: Additional Curates Society, p.3

⁸¹ Lambourne, R., 1983, "Personal Reformation and Political Formation in Pastoral Care", p. 184-6 in, Wilson, M., Ed., *Explorations in Health and Salvation: A Selection of Papers by Bob Lambourne*, Birmingham: Institute for the Study of Worship and Religious Architecture, University of Birmingham

⁸² Fowler, op. cit., p.20

⁸³ Lyall, *Integrity*, p.170- 71

⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14, 20, 26-7, NRSV

It is on the basis of biblical traditions such as this one that Hans Kung writes in *The Church* of a charismatic community employing God-given gifts of its many members. Pauline traditions underscore the divine purpose in gifting. 'To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.'⁸⁵

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

... The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ ...as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.⁸⁶

Other New Testament references speak to the corporate nature of Christianity. However, given the historical de-emphasis on universal participation referred to by Groome and lamented in Kung's work, and obvious in Protestant circles as well, this point is worth repeating. *Shared Christian praxis* is a call to effective communal action as a vehicle for the church's ministry and mission.

Elaborating on the style of *shared Christian praxis* for ministry, the author details the implications of the word *shared*.

The word *shared* points to this approach as one of mutual partnership, active participation, and dialogue with oneself, with others, with God and with Story/Vision of Christian faith.

The rationale for a process of partnership, participation, and dialogue can be briefly stated: ...Christian identity/agency always means membership in the Christian church, which is to be an "inclusive discipleship of equals" who constitute the Body of Christ.⁸⁷

This is congruent with the biblical doctrine of creation and redemption. Human persons, created in the divine image, are capable of meaningful contribution to the well being of humankind, indeed of creation. God's universal love redeems, so that persons, conscious of that power operative in their lives, may claim their worth as God's very own people, and reflect that divine image.

Shared Christian praxis invites participants to engage in critical hermeneutics where they interpret their life narratives within the context of understandings of Christian

⁸⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:7 NRSV

⁸⁶ Ephesians 4: 7, 11-12, 16 NRSV

⁸⁷ Groome, op. cit. p.142

faith.⁸⁸ Only thus can individuals courageously affirm their own identity, accept themselves as they discover who they are and who they must become. The dialectical processes involved, and the communal dynamics of the teaching /learning encounters so sponsored, are equally vital for pastoral ministry that is effective in that it is transformative. This is true whether the care mediating agency comprises several persons or is serviced by a single servant - lay or ordained. In the case of a single caregiver, such as an ordained pastor or specialist lay counsellor, authority derives from a connection with the faith community. As Bonhoeffer observed, ‘where there is no community there is no leadership ... the group is the womb of the leader. It gives him [sic] everything, even his [sic] authority.’⁸⁹ Writing from a socio-cultural perspective, Walter Earl Fluker, an African American, explains the communal derivation of leadership. The leader’s role, he notes, is that of a bearer of the stories of her or his tradition.⁹⁰

A Black perspective on pastoral care focuses on its corporate nature. The writers Lartey, Gilkes, Brown, and Mulrain either criticise the tendency for pastoral care practice to become individualistic in direction or focus on the communal aspect of effective pastoral action.⁹¹ When Lartey points to love as the motive for care, he reminds us that ‘love is a thoroughly social phenomenon’ which brings us into relationship with others and for others. Since love is concerned for ‘the total well-being of the whole person’, it seeks to educate and to foster human growth.⁹² Given the place that maroon holds in Montserrat’s identity consciousness, attention to the corporate dimension in pastoral care could serve to enhance its effectiveness. As mentioned earlier, Barnes’ study of psychosocial aspects of the volcanic disaster highlights the role of self-help counselling groups. It makes a strong case for the

⁸⁸ Groome, op. cit., p.145

⁸⁹ Anderson, R., 1986, *Minding God’s Business*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, p.78
quoting Bonhoeffer in *No Rusty Swords*

⁹⁰ Fluker, W., “The Failure of Ethical Leadership and the Challenge of Hope”, p. 11, in Fluker, W., ed., *The Stones that the Builders Rejected*, Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International

⁹¹ See Lartey, “Pastoral counselling in multi-cultural perspective”, op. cit., *In Living Colour*, op. cit., “African perspectives” op. cit., Gilkes, C., op. cit., Brown, J., 1997, “Young, Gifted and Black” in *Contact*, 122, 11-16, Mulrain, G, 1995, “Bereavement counselling among African Caribbean people in Britain” *Contact*, 118, 9-11

⁹² Lartey, *In Living Colour*, p.5, 7

utilisation of traditional wisdom and culturally appropriate models of care and counselling.⁹³

L. Graham espouses a culturally sensitive systemic approach to care, that

...seeks to reconnect persons and communities with their traditions, while at the same time assisting with the construction of new traditions that are responsive to the personal needs and historical realities of our own time.⁹⁴

Graham's stated concern is to shift the focus of care from the individual into the socio-economic and political realm. It does not lessen the challenge for *shared Christian praxis* which is to actualise its conception of Christian Story/Vision in demonstrating how desired corporate models can be achieved through a theologically valid, creative mix of new approaches vested with the wisdom accrued from old traditions.

Summary

Shared implies that ideally, pastoral care

- is given by or on behalf of the faith community,
- is offered by individuals whose authority derives from the community,
- requires the resources of differing gifts of members of the faith community,
- affirms the worth of participants as persons in community, and
- fosters the growth of individuals and community.

Implications for Pastoral Care

The Problem of Individualism

When one considers that in practice, pastoral care often fails to meet the above criteria, *shared Christian praxis* is important. As praxis, it calls for consistent reviewing and renewal of pastoral care practices. It is not just an exercise in restating the ideal, but more of a practice oriented process that determines concrete corrective action. Notwithstanding its establishment as a haven for Irish Catholics, Montserrat

⁹³ Barnes, *The Montserrat Volcanic Disaster*, p.19, 29-30, 139-41, 379

⁹⁴ Graham, L., 1992, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds: A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville: Abingdon, p.9

has a largely Protestant population today. The Protestant emphasis on the personal worth and accountability of the individual, rather than prompting individual lay persons into collective engagement in pastoral care, often serves to promote the very individualism which amounts to a travesty of the priesthood of all believers. In Protestant circles as in Catholicism, pastoral care, like the rest of the church's ministry, continues to be largely recognised as a clerical function to be ordered by the church's hierarchy. What a praxis-focussed theology can do is to explore the problem of the resulting identification of the pastoral role with the clerical one, and to formulate means whereby, in a given context, the undesired twinning can be resolved.

It is in response to this need (to resolve the problematic identification of the pastoral role with the clerical one) that theorists have repeatedly registered the call for the recovery of corporate models for delivering care. What they have been cautious about doing, however, is to suggest practical approaches toward realising this. This caution is understandable since pastoral practices operate within cultural contexts and what is practicable in one context may not fit into another. There is also the lurking fear of theology becoming captive to any particular cultural situation. At the same time, it is in practice that theology finds expression. Yet very few writers have critically focused on specific theologically valid cultural elements which may contribute to more effective models for pastoral care.⁹⁵ More often persons broadly appeal to the communal aspects of early Christianity without identifying possible sources for cooperative action within the individualistic trends that operate today. The need for pastoral care to reflect its Christian roots is stated without the recognition the particular cultural arrangements which once served a collective approach cannot be replicated in other cultural situations.

Creating Community

This concern is related to the previous one since the tendency to individualism threatens the development of community. The exercise of corporate care is one indicator that churches are taking seriously their profession of the priesthood of all believers. It does well, therefore, for pastoral ministry to be intentional about meeting

⁹⁵ e.g. Lartey who gives seven perspectives characteristic of African life and thought and suggests how each one may enrich pastoral response. See Lartey, E., "African perspectives", op. cit.

the human need for affirmation through individuals' participation with others in activities that are responsive to their common needs.

...pastors and pastoral care theorists must constantly have one ear open to the shifts that take place in the ways persons experience their needs and problems of living and the other open to the currents of change in ways of understanding and interpreting human needs. Both these listenings need always to be kept in an intentional and sometimes intense dialogue with what the Christian tradition has historically said about human needs and problems and their relationship to issues of faith.⁹⁶

People need to be valued. At a time of increased educational opportunity, people need a sense that they are worthy not simply because of the skills they possess, but because of who they are. Attempts to utilize the skills of persons are useful, but churches must be careful not to give the impression that lay persons are capable of doing only those tasks that ministers would rather not. Getting a congregation involved in pastoral care is first getting individuals to recognise themselves as able participants in pastoral practices and in doing theology. In the case of Valerie, presented in the next chapter, we meet a woman who feels competent to and is desirous of engaging in pastoral care rather than in fundraising programmes. Unfortunately, the notion that such engagement belongs to clergy persons underlies her context.

Among Montserratians, as is the trend in the African diaspora, participatory religion continues to be highly valued. While there are signs of stagnation in the growth of some congregations in the older established churches, participation in Christian churches is intense and lay persons are taking greater interest in the day to day operations of their congregations. Their involvement in decision making with regards to church management is sometimes encouraged by structural changes in the churches. Such developments suggest a more egalitarian approach to congregational life but in reality represent the church's response to the increased specialisation that obtains in the wider society. It hides the hierarchy's interest in preserving for the ordained pastor an area of specialized knowledge such as pastoral care.

Ordained pastors leading congregations are called to share the power associated with ecclesiastical authority and to be intentional about training congregations for engagement in this area of the church's mission. *Shared Christian praxis* is about

⁹⁶ Gerkin, *Widening the Horizons*, p. 12-13

harnessing the collective potential of God's caring people for the good of all. The greatest challenge may lie here. Foskett claims that the 'challenge and promise of pastoral counselling' is to be found in the caring potential of people and institutions.⁹⁷ One unfortunate consequence of the development of counselling skills for professionalism in pastoral care has been the creation of a 'competence gap' between specialist clergy counsellors and the general membership of the church. While training for professionalism is important, ordinary human caring must also be encouraged.⁹⁸ If indeed, pastoral care is to be a shared praxis, it must be truly a participatory exercise for all. Corporate care is testimony to the church's charismatic foundation as it shows that indeed the Spirit of loving concern is poured out in all God's people.

Applying the Insights of the Clinical Disciplines

The need exists for balance in the integration of theological and psychological insights. The mid-twentieth century growth in the pastoral counselling movement has been thoroughly criticised for its heavy dependence on the theories and methodologies of psychology and psychotherapy. Browning notes, though, that whereas the final quarter of the last century was marked by competition and mutual distrust between religion and clinical psychology/ psychiatry, 1940-70 marked a period of cooperative relationship in their efforts to promote healing of persons. He therefore challenges the disciplines to articulate a public philosophy that clarifies their relation with one another.⁹⁹ Patton and Runyon observe that the dialogue between theology and the human sciences can be fruitful only if each discipline is prepared to 'take seriously the other's claim to offer a theoretical, reflective, and useful way of interpreting human phenomena'.¹⁰⁰

Campbell, seeing no bridge between religion and the clinical sciences, maintains that such alliance would mean something he calls culturally-bound religion, which

⁹⁷ Foskett, J. ,1999, "The challenge and promise of pastoral counselling' in *Clinical Counselling in Pastoral Settings*, ed. G. Lynch, London: Routledge, p 129

⁹⁸ Campbell, *Rediscovering*, 59-60

⁹⁹ Browning, D., 1990, "Citizenship, Saintliness, and Health: Relations Between Religion and Clinical Psychological Disciplines", *Contact*,102, p.4-6.

¹⁰⁰ Patton, J.,1993, *Pastoral Care in Context*, p.238

Runyon, T. "Pastoral Theological Methodology' in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, p.863

implies such a dilution of theological anthropology enough to render it useless in restoring health to humanity as a whole.¹⁰¹ But his resistance to a marriage between the two seems to be illustrative of Stein's reference to 'the intransigent unwillingness of the theological community ... to shift to an anthropology which included the unconscious, especially the demonic aspects of its own moralism...'¹⁰² Campbell seems here to ignore the whole history of religion as inevitably culturally bound. He also appears to contradict his earlier proposition concerning 'a fresh understanding of sin and grace,' a suggestion which by implication supports the call for a new look at human nature.¹⁰³ By contrast, his work *The Gospel of Anger* has much to offer towards the articulation of a more relevant theological anthropology, one especially valuable for the Montserrat crisis setting where expressions of anger were misunderstood by most, including the angry persons themselves. This is not surprising since in pastoral care anger has been viewed as undesirable, something best avoided, or if unavoidable, at least minimised. However, outbursts of anger during focus group reflections conducted as part of this research were, for the most part, opportunities for healing and gave good support for the positions taken by theologians cited in the next three paragraphs.

Campbell's discourse on the enigma of a passionately loving and passionately angry God presented in the bible is an inquiry into the value of anger. While accepting that anger has the power to injure and to destroy, he contends that there is a positive side to this human emotion. Using normal human situations he shows that anger can be useful in stimulating political action and so becomes a valuable resource for the church's prophetic ministry of transforming oppressive human environments.¹⁰⁴

Lester treats the subject in a similar fashion. In contrast to the traditional Christian approach to anger as sinful, he offers a theological anthropology that places value on human emotion.

Our capacity for anger is one of God's good gifts, intentionally rooted in creation and serving important purposes in human life. Though we can certainly sin with it, our anger also contributes to such life

¹⁰¹ Campbell, A. 1990, "Response to Don Browning", *Contact*, 102, 12-5

¹⁰² Stein, E., 1980, "Reactions to Dr. Oden's 'Recovering Lost Identity'", *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 34, p.21

¹⁰³ Campbell, *Rediscovering*, p.9

¹⁰⁴ Campbell, A., 1986, *The Gospel of Anger*, London: SPCK. See especially Chapter 5.

experiences as courage, hope, and intimacy. Anger is not necessarily contrary to love and can actually function as an expression of love.¹⁰⁵

His pastoral theology of anger takes into account the contributions of feminist theologians who examine connections between anger and personal and social relationships.¹⁰⁶ Movement towards a more adequate anthropology is obvious in the work of Elaine Graham who holds a place for the intuitive and affective dimensions of the human psyche in moral decision making processes. Feminist perspectives offer a corrective to pastoral care's failure to encourage emotive expression, one factor often cited as a crucial difference between psychological and theological approaches to counselling.

Critical acceptance of clinical insights for a more helpful theological anthropology will also help to address the tendency for churches to encourage unhelpful approaches towards the subject of human sexuality. Like anger, human sexuality remains a hushed issue. In Montserrat, churches engage in little or no discussion on the matter. When the drama production *Ash* cited reduced opportunities for sexual activity as one cause of escalating stress and tensions among persons, it stated explicitly: 'the Christian council will not like this.'¹⁰⁷ This observation reflects a long standing notion that the human body and sexual activity are inherently sinful.

Praxis: Ministry as knowing, being, and doing

Shared Christian praxis encompasses the three Aristotelian dimensions of 'knowing'. In this understanding of praxis, *theoria* is viewed as a reflective aspect of *praxis*, engagement that facilitates people's appropriation and expression of their self consciousness as 'being' in the world. Such reflection enables clarification of the perspective through which they have processed the historical 'theoretical' formulations of their communities, both in its secular and religious life.¹⁰⁸ *Praxis*, the second category, traditionally referred to the practical life. Purposeful, reflective action was taken as the evidence of *praxis*. The third Aristotelian dimension, *poesis*, focussed on the productive life of creativity. In current understanding, *praxis* has its

¹⁰⁵ Lester, A., 2003, *The Angry Christian: A Theology for Care and Counseling*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, p.3

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.134-35

¹⁰⁷ Cumberbatch, C., 1998, "Ash: The Second Falling", Montserrat: Plenty Plenty Yac Ya Ya

¹⁰⁸ Groome, *op. cit.*, p.137

creative aspects. “We can identify as creative the impetus within praxis for ongoing praxis, the fact that our reflection / action forms and disposes us to so continue.’ Groome contends that ‘all theoretical, practical and productive expressions’ should be infused with this ‘creative/ ethical aspect of praxis’.¹⁰⁹ By holding the three dimensions in tension, he proposes a *praxis* that allows for people’s concrete yet reflective and critical involvement as Christians growing and sharing together. By doing theology, they reflect on pastoral practice. Praxis goes beyond reflection on action to renewed action. Praxis is ever renewing so that its participants are living agents of transformation in God’s world today.

Theology as praxis is an important theme in contemporary methodology. Current understanding validates *praxis* as a way of learning since engagement in reflection on historical action provides the educational basis for corrective action. For the Caribbean search for meaningful approaches to theology in the context of historical oppression, the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire strikes a resonant chord. His understanding of *praxis* as a philosophical underpinning for his ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ contributes to its effectiveness in education as a means of social transformation. Speaking of the subversive, transforming power of Freire’s pedagogy, Richard Shaull writes

.. those who, in learning to read and write, come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them the opportunity of participation.¹¹⁰

Through an understanding of praxis as encompassing theory and reflection, involving ethical and practical action, participants are encouraged to re-think classical philosophies in the context of their particular historical situation. From this process there emerges a ‘critical consciousness’, that ‘new awareness’ which stimulates a people’s capacity to examine with suspicion all assumptions about the “givenness” of their own history and culture. Persons come to embrace their roles as agents of positive change, and their commitment to transformation increases.

Since a praxis focussed way of doing theology and ministry is empowering for participants and encouraging their involvement, it enhances the delivery of pastoral care. Such an approach is desirable in Montserratian society where an artificial

¹⁰⁹ Groome, op.cit., p.137

¹¹⁰ in Foreword, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.9

separation between Christian faith practice and cultural expressions obtains. Schreiter commenting on the emergence of 'a Christian praxis of faith' especially in the context of oppressive societies, notes the effectiveness of such development in communities where 'acute social transformation' is needed. He observes the value of both its theoretical and practical components.

In the theoretical moment an analysis of the social structure is undertaken, revealing the relationships of power, oppression, and freedom. The theoretical moment includes reflection on how God is active in human history, bringing judgement and a transformative moment to history. Such analysis and correlation with the perceived activity of God lead to transformative action on the part of the community of believers. In turn that action is reflected upon to reveal God's activity, leading to yet further action. The dialectical process of reflection and action are both essential to the theological process. Theology cannot remain only with reflection; nor can it be reduced to practice. Good reflection leads to action, and action is not completed until it has been reflected upon.¹¹¹

This underscores the point made earlier concerning the need for practitioners to learn together through shared reflection. What they learn is reflected in what they do. Their actions can also stimulate their learning new ways of being and doing. As they reflect upon pastoral activity, caregivers consider how best to address shortcomings noted in approaches used. In hindsight they detect omissions or other failures and envision more helpful ways of engaging in similar tasks in the future. This praxis orientation allows pastoral caregivers to visualise the exercise of care in ways that are more relevant for their particular contexts. Schreiter's support for praxis oriented theologies encourages a view of church tradition as consisting of different local theologies arising in response to varying cultural situations. For Montserrat, one needs to guard against repeating past error by constructing a theology skewed by imposed interpretations and generalisations. This would be disrespectful to persons living and serving with unique cultural realities and persons who have, through the agency of research participants, expressed their self-understanding in terms of these realities. To ignore the expressions of these Montserradians would be tantamount to repeating the mistakes of the past. Critical reflection and creative action must pursue the prophetic task of clarifying people's true consciousness and exposing false assumptions conditioned by past oppressive relations.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Schreiter, R., 1985, *Constructing Local Theologies*, London: SCM Press, p. 91-2.

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 92

When culture is interpreted as encompassing a whole way of life, no one culture is seen as superior to the other. Freire denounces the futility of rigid judgements that tend to devalue the unfamiliar culture, Freire points to the element of *resistance* which should cancel a commonly held myth that the dominant ideology succeeds in totally subjugating a people's cultural expressions of creativity.

Sometimes, in our uncritical understanding in the name of struggle, we can be led to believe that all the everyday life of the people is a mere reproduction of the dominant ideology. But it is not. There will always be something of the dominant ideology in the cultural expressions of the people, but there is also in contradiction to it the signs of resistance- in the language, in music, in food preferences, in popular religion, in their understanding of the world.¹¹³

For Montserrat, one needs only to hear the ubiquitous *jumbie name* to know this, or to inquire into the *jumbie dance* about which a foreign journalist writes.

On the eve of the big match they held a 'jumbie dance' appealing to their 'jumbies', walking dead men akin to the zombies of African voodoo. To the pounding of African bongo drums, they asked the jumbies to smile on their team and bring them victory. The jumbies responded with a half-smile: the Montserrat team scraped a draw."¹¹⁴

The survival of the *jumbie* dance is indicative of the resistance about which Freire writes. This research values such elements and identifies indigenous cultural resources which have not been allowed free expression in official Christianity, but which, like the jumbie dance, will not simply go away. Some elements of resistance may prove fertile for the development of a culturally sensitive praxis of care.

One consequence of such *praxis* oriented approach has been the self-discovery, in moments of resistance, of hitherto unrecognised resources on which and with which a people could participate in building a new ideology.¹¹⁵ It is on the basis of resistance-conscious *praxis* that application of Groome's method involves research participants with the varied religio-cultural resources that they bring. An important aspect of this research has been its commitment to respecting people's own understanding of reality and recognising their forms of action and struggle. Evidence from field research shows that indeed, a *praxis* orientation to theology and ministry

¹¹³ Freire, P., Faundez, A., 1989, *Learning To Question. A Pedagogy of Liberation*. Geneva : WCC Books, p.26-7

¹¹⁴ Davison, op. cit., p.32. Reference to a 1990 cricket match for which local fans sought to end Montserrat's losing streak by invoking ancestors.

¹¹⁵ Friere & Faundez, op. cit., p.27

is healing and empowering, and an effective way to enhance people's commitment to their own individual and collective pastoral care.

Shared Christian praxis helps in this way because it is rooted in a philosophical anthropology of humans as *agent-subjects-in-relationship*. 'We achieve authentic subjectivity by caring for and receiving care from other people.' To enable growth and action on the part of responsible subjects, pastoral ministry must encourage persons to become agents of transformation rather than simply tell them who or what they should be. In Groome's 'epistemic ontology', 'knowing' is inseparable from 'being'. A relevant, 'conative' pedagogy must originate within a people's praxis.¹¹⁶ In a sense, what we think and believe, and how we act out our beliefs truly represent who we are. Jesus' reference to the human heart as the source of things that defile makes this point, albeit in an oblique manner. Likewise, Groome sums up all its dimensions and in essence presents *shared Christian praxis* as the full expression of Christian knowing, being and doing.

Summary

Praxis implies that pastoral care

- facilitates critical reflection among its participants
- requires creative and practical involvement of its participants
- involves participants as subjects in reflection and action
- takes seriously the historical and cultural realities of its participants
- enables participants' critical appraisal of their historical and cultural situation.
- serves a prophetic function through participants as agents of transformation
- informs theology and so corrects and enhances its own work.

Implications for Pastoral Care

Intra-religious dialogue

In Montserrat, the majority of persons belong to Christian congregations and define their religious orientation as a Christian one. They have, however, inherited from

¹¹⁶ Groome, op. cit., p.7-9, 133-4.

pre-Christian situations cultural traditions that are socially acceptable, as their widespread practice suggests. In the reflection essential to a praxis oriented approach to pastoral care persons must be encouraged to engage in intra-religious dialogue that critically exposes these elements. As this happens, individually and collectively, they can appropriate positive cultural elements and integrate these with resources from distinctly Christian sources into Christian faith praxis. This research is intentional in using an approach that encourages the recovery of cultural elements valuable for pastoral care. On the other hand, some traditional Western Christian positions need to be de-emphasised within a framework for critical theological reflection even though they have been accepted as normative. This pursuit presents the greater challenge since “missionary” Christianity has tended to impose assumptions concerning the superiority of Western cultural traditions.

Interculturality

The secularising influences of modernity are not removed from Montserrat. The boundaries between this small island and the rest of the world are now more diffuse, assisted by strategies of information technology and the relative ease of international travel. This is even more so in the aftermath of a disaster that forced its residents abroad. As one local put it ‘Montserratians have linked up all over the world.’¹¹⁷

While those who travel abroad come into contact with new cultures and peoples which indirectly affect life, in Montserrat there has been an influx of workers to assist reconstruction efforts. Much skilled and semi-skilled labour comes from the Caribbean, notably Guyana - a country with ethnic and religious polarities, and one with cultures aspects of which are distinctly different to what is regarded as Montserratian. In recent years, Guyanese cuisine, for example, has become popular. Comments from research participants provide a window into the local situation.

We had a young woman living here...from Guyana...and she was a Hindu
(female, resident American, Pentecostal)

With us losing those persons [who went abroad], with our cultural heritage, values, the level of spirituality, that we have a lot of persons migrating, or coming into Montserrat...they obviously will impact on the culture and some things which our community would not have been party to, that is now becoming part of the community.
(male, Montserratian, Pentecostal pastor)

¹¹⁷ Interview with psychologist, female, Anglican

...you see the Guyanese, and you see the Spanish people... is not only Guyanese, but you have Jamaicans and so.

(female, Montserratian, Methodist)

the foreigners...new people coming to the land, they are coming to church... but they are not like people that seemingly come to church as a habit. They come today and you don't see them for 2 or 3 more weeks, you know. It's different to what we're accustomed with Montserratians who tend to come to church every Sunday. They're not regular. Well, regular visitors.

(female, Montserratian, Wesleyan Holiness)

We're having to recruit a lot of overseas [workers]...a lot of people from Guyana...in the service now, Dominica, Jamaica, CARICOM people. And several people from further afield. In the medical field, the doctors have largely been Indian doctors. Sometimes there's a language difficulty.

(adult female, public service manager, Pentecostal)

Migrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic introduce new languages to the extent that Spanish radio programmes are presented on government radio. Some Christian congregations explore outreach programmes catering for these newcomers. But their arrival is often viewed with suspicion. Then there are the highly paid British professionals whose presence evokes mixed reactions among residents.

...that's an example of how aid sometimes does not help...aid projects do provide employment and commerce, to some extent, but it's an example of how our resources and our resourcefulness as individuals and indeed as people becomes completely displaced by our so-called aid partners. And unfortunately that happened again with the volcano. And that has been the most destructive aspect of the volcano...that our creativity, our ability to solve our problems, has been taken away from us.

(adult male, medical worker, Methodist)

I would say DFID bashing. DFID bashing was a national pastime, and that, I think that was clear very much from looking at things like *The Montserrat Reporter*, at the time. You go through it by page and see how much many times it was mentioned and how many times it was negative, and it was all negative.

(British professional, male)

I never felt a problem with that...there was the odd person being antagonistic, but generally when I've spoken with Montserratians, I've felt that there's been no conflict there at all.

(British professional, female)

I had trouble, well, not trouble, but the newspapers...I've just had a feeling that perhaps I've had to work a bit harder to develop a relationship so people can trust you.

(British professional, female)

The current mix of cultures in Montserrat brings to the fore the need for interculturality in pastoral care that setting. With this in mind, this research has employed the hermeneutical approach of *shared Christian praxis* that facilitates intercultural communication in the search for insights to improve pastoral practices. Critical application of this method facilitates the respectful listening and dialogue which must characterise Christian pastoral ministry in its efforts to encourage healing and wholeness among persons, which is its service to God.

4. Conclusion

This chapter presented pastoral care as integral, not optional, to the functions of Christian ministry. It is a diverse and dynamic activity that involves individual persons in collective service for individuals and communities. To fulfil its purpose effectively, pastoral care must take seriously the context for service, and it must be careful to use well the historical opportunities in the situations it serves. As a shared praxis, it makes for people's collective dialogue and reflection on their situation in ways that reflect their Christian identities.

Shared Christian praxis as a way of doing theology and ministry is illuminating. It values the historicity of persons who participate in ministry and helps them to identify themselves within the contexts of Christian Story and Vision which encompasses the entire scope of changing Christian traditions. In the context of the Montserrat volcanic disaster, it facilitates the necessary dialogue with formative cultures, political and social histories and how these impact on the needs and judgements of Montserratians today.

As a shared praxis, Christian pastoral care involves doing theology which in turn informs pastoral praxis of care. It is the doing of theology and practical ministry by the community. Communities of care must be constantly reflecting on praxis, seeking to correct their failures and involving all practitioners in the transformation of their lives and of their societies. Pastoral care as a shared praxis is healing, self-correcting ministry. In promoting dialogue and reconciliation, it participates in what God is doing. As praxis, it is ever renewing. It is action oriented, but it is also reflexive. Reflection upon action informs renewed action by its participants. But action is not the end in itself, and there is constant dialogue between reflection and praxis. It remains ever conscious that the church's ministry is not an end in itself but points to God's reign for creation.

Pastoral Care in Disaster: A Theological Reflection

Chapter Four: When Care Fails

1. Introduction

In this chapter, five pastoral situations, actual cases encountered during the Montserrat disaster, are presented. In four of these, the researcher was the main pastoral caregiver. In one situation she was consulted because family relationships had deteriorated sharply in the wake of pastoral intervention which some family members had judged to be extremely harsh and contributing to further malaise and dysfunction in their situation. Each case is a complex one and can be the subject of further discussion. The five are selected to illustrate a number of pastoral failures that have direct bearing on this research. They are, among others, situations that triggered within me a sense that pastoral models in use left much to be desired.

For each case, I give a brief sketch of what transpired. This is followed by a commentary. The section is labelled “commentary” rather than “analysis”, since it represents the researcher’s reflections which started during the events. The comments are, of course, informed by pastoral training and experience, and therefore present perspectives from a number of sources. But this is not their final treatment in the research. In my role as facilitator for *shared Christian praxis* focus groups, I invited reflection on the concerns arising. As a result, reflection on similar and related concerns recurred during the theological reflections that are central to the research.

2. Concerns Arising in the Disaster Situation

Oden’s call for pastoral counselling to ‘recover its lost identity’, cited in Chapter Three, and Browning’s discussion on pastoral care’s Jewish and Christian roots, also mentioned in the last chapter, are emblematic of a resistance on the part of Christian pastors who reacted to the increasing tendency for pastoral counsellors to accept guidance from psychology and psychoanalysis, rather than from Christian theology.

In the sophisticated debate triggered by Oden’s concern, Edward Stein admitted that American pastoral psychology had, to some extent, neglected classical theological resources; but he explained that the imbalance might well have been encouraged by

the theological community's resistance to adopting a more adequate anthropology.¹ The discussion in the last chapter presented current suggestions to address this problem.

Richard Krebs, an experienced American clinical psychologist who also served as pastor, listed four reasons 'Why Pastors Should Not Be Counselors'.² In his response, David Switzer presented a rebuttal supporting his conviction that pastors have a necessary and positive role as counsellors serving in the context of the church's ministry. He mentioned such situations as when ministers would be required to engage persons in problem solving processes over extended periods of time. He states

Krebs...seems to ignore the fact that many ministers are not in a position to make referrals because they are in isolated rural areas and often deal with very poor people.³

Switzer's answers are intended to address valid concerns raised by Krebs, for example, role confusion on the part of the pastor. The real life situation faced by small communities such as Montserrat means that role confusion is just another facet of life in general since intersections between personal and professional roles are frequent. One's sibling may be the professional colleague, sports team mate or blood relative of the social worker, psychologist or counsellor available. And even for larger communities where such a dilemma is inconceivable, there is the possibility that things change rapidly for the worse, such as is the case with natural disaster. In such a context, deeply troubling questions of meaning are bound to arise; and as they do, the pastor is probably one of the first persons whose assistance is sought in the search for answers. To refer to the professional psychologist as a first recourse is not an option. Worse still, such response could be understood by both pastor and careseeker as a shirking of pastoral responsibility.

In the context of the Montserrat volcanic crisis, service to the Methodist Church and wider community provided me opportunity to appreciate first hand some of the criticisms made about pastoral counselling theories, and to make judgements of my own. From my perspective, the theories seemed to assume a high probability of a

¹ Stein, op. cit., p.21

² Krebs, R., 1980, "Why Pastors Should Not Be Counselors", *J. Past. Care*, 34, 229-33

³ Switzer, 1983, "Why Pastors SHOULD Be Counselors (of a Sort): A response to Richard L. Krebs", *J. Past. Care*, 37, 28-32, p.28

universal separation between the tasks of pastoral care and pastoral counselling and to ignore circumstances in which the two were necessarily inseparable. Pastoral counselling theory tended to assume a high level of clinical competence beyond the expertise of the ordained pastor who has completed a standard programme of orientation in pastoral care. Whereas literature in pastoral care seemed to be deliberately and narrowly grounded in traditional Christian theology, deciphering and applying pastoral counselling theory seemed to require intensive technical training in Psychotherapy.

Neither of these polarities results in effective pastoral practice. I related the apparent divergence between these two to L. Graham's observation of, on the one hand, 'a widening split between the care of persons and care of the larger environments in which persons live',⁴ and on the other to Ramshaw's description of pastoral counselling as distorted, 'privatised, narrowly focussed on the needs of the moment, insufficiently grounded in the depths of tradition, tone-deaf to mystery.' Indeed, she apportions blame for the stated distortions largely to the 'co-opting of theology's role by psychological theory.'⁵

Situations such as arise in disaster may challenge the artificial separation between pastoral care and pastoral counselling. Following the onset of volcanic eruptions, the community of which I was part required pastors to be counsellors. People were faced with questions of faith and they were searching for answers. In my own pastoral relationships with others, it would have been unwise for me to make decisions for them, but it fell to me as pastor to help them discover options with which they could live and still maintain their integrity as Christian believers. The current models of pastoral counselling did not speak to our situation since careseekers approached pastoral conversations from a decidedly theological standpoint.

Yet, persons were facing issues that extended into areas which pastoral practices have not taken seriously. They needed to take decisive action while the total environment - physical, economic, social, political, and spiritual- was changing rapidly. The population did not have the luxury of time in which to grow towards responsible decision making, so that the recommended non-directive counselling approaches would not help. There was no constancy of resources, human or material,

⁴ Graham, L, op. cit, p.12

⁵ Ramshaw, E., 1987, *Ritual and Pastoral Care*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p.14-15.

to which one could resort. Social networks including churches were in a state of transition, with families often in chaos. As outward migration increased, some leaders of churches were expected to shoulder pastoral responsibility for additional congregations. In fact, pastors were, in general, stretched to the limit with little time or energy left for their family concerns. In interviews, a family crisis was cited as the modal concern of pastors who decided to evacuate the island.⁶

In Montserrat, the imperative to care was more than an invitation to support persons with their psychological and internalised spiritual struggles. While it would have been practically useless, indeed impossible, for pastors to ignore the intra-psychic processes that prompted requests for their intervention, it was also essential that any intervention on their part be sufficiently aware of and sensitive to the political and cultural dynamics at work. The rally for community survival seemed to demand that leaders, religious and otherwise, be committed together to the collective task of preparing for a better future, one of inspiring hope in the context of a challenging present among a people holding the memory of hurt in the past. Such calling to total involvement with and immersion in a community struggling in the midst of disaster evoked my conviction that the church and its pastoral leaders were poorly equipped for the challenges at hand.

What is the pastor to do when such a situation arises? How does s/he faithfully and effectively offer pastoral care and fulfil the role of counsellor, especially when the crisis situation reinforces on the one hand the problematic of pastoral counselling's excessive reliance on categories from psychology, and on the other the acceptance of a practical dichotomy between pastoral care and counselling? How does s/he reconcile the absence in pastoral care theory of an interface with the historical and cultural realities of a particular people with their actual participation in pastoral care? And how does one address the challenge of the church's institutional hierarchy which militates against the realization of the priesthood of all believers at the very moment when all of its resources are needed?

⁶ 8 overseas-based pastors were interviewed in this research. The first two were transferred by their communions. They were contacted because of the frequent, usually positive, references to their pastoral service. The other six were interviewed because of frequent, generally negative, reactions to the departure of pastors during the volcanic crisis. Of these 6 (2 female, 4 male), 3 (2 female, 1 male) left for family reasons, 1 for medical treatment, 1 because of intense fear of the volcano and in the last case, all other members of the congregation had already evacuated Montserrat. Both women had sought and received permission from their churches. The men did not seek the church's permission.

These are key concerns in this research. In the context of disaster it became obvious that there is a need for approaches to pastoral care that resolve the dilemmas stated above. On the basis of pastoral care functions outlined in the previous chapter, the search for relevant theological perspectives begins with illustrations of current problems using field data from the Montserrat context. As Elaine Graham rightly observes, ‘a critical theology of pastoral practice cannot be pursued without close reference to concrete examples of engagement.’⁷

With this in mind, actual pastoral situations are presented that forced theological reflection in the first place: fictitious names are given to all persons and congregations and places.⁸ In the commentary that follows in each case, my own theological reflection on the particular “volcano experience” is suggested by references to the schema of *shared Christian praxis*. These situations will, however, be further analysed in the light of theological insights derived from group reflections towards corrective praxis. For this reason, I have deliberately avoided progression to Movement 5 even if resources have been identified that could facilitate decision or response. The initial indications of Movements 1 through 4 in the theological method are intended to give a preview into its use with data arising in focus group meetings.

3. Volcano Experiences

Mixed-up life in a shelter

At the start of the eruptions, churches and school buildings were used as dwelling places. The EOC had attempted, as far as possible, to keep local communities together. So the people living in a particular church building were more likely to be from the same physical neighbourhood than from the same congregation, and among them, a small minority were not active members of any churches. That was a sore point for some members of one congregation for which I had pastoral charge. To make matters worse, there was a family of alcoholics residing in their church, who ignored regulations barring the consumption of alcohol in public shelters.

Members of the congregation who had not been displaced and continued to reside in their own homes, invited me to their chapel. Their appeal had the tone of a court

⁷ Graham, E., *Transforming Practice*, p. 172

⁸ The place names do not appear on the map in Figure 2 as any such indication would violate the confidentiality needed for this research.

summons which if ignored, would result in the immediate and forcible eviction of the offending shelterees. Scrupulous Methodists reminded me that permitting the presence of alcohol on the premises constituted a breach of church discipline. It was a practice that neither they nor their ancestors condoned. They thought that it was bad enough to have the EOC expecting them to house people who had no use for the church; but they were not prepared to let their holy building be desecrated. In their view, there was only one solution - to throw the “rum-drinkers” out. The head of the offending household tendered a less than sincere apology. But, she explained, it was her birthday and she felt that the church people should understand.

While it must be noted that all islanders were traumatised by the news of volcanic activity and the resulting displacement, it was obvious to me that my congregation had much to learn about pastoral care.⁹ In the absence of outsiders, we had shared

⁹ It must be stated that the receiving congregation had experienced its own trauma, having lost its usual space for communal worship. It is impossible to quantify the levels of trauma experienced by persons in varying situations. In the transcript below one speaker who not relocated gives a clear indication that the non-relocated too, had been traumatised. Residents who did not have to move from home also experienced displacement. My family, for example, continued to live at home, hosting seventeen persons at the same time. When the situation became intolerable, we rented a small space from another resident who had chosen to move abroad temporarily. In the following transcript which will be reflected on in the section *The Challenge of Difference* in Chapter Five, non-relocated residents challenge those who had relocated, inviting the latter to understand that both sides had their experiences of trauma.

XK: So what I’m saying, you have that kind of thing as well, that sometimes it is always believed that those of us from out here, that we are not considerate. But sometimes the things have been done to you, that 1st experience, the second time-...

XG: But what I find, there is this little thing at certain places where they quick to say ‘you all’, ‘you all who come over here’ and I don’t like it.

XK: But that is a natural human thing. That will come out. Human error. That woulda come out if we had go on the other side as well...

XG: They tend to say that we taking over. We’re not ... We are helping.

XK: Admittedly... In some areas, a lot of people try to take over...

XK: If you look sharp, they take over you own house.

* We are recognising that there were needs on both sides of the equation.

discussions about caring for others and accepting those who were different. Now it seemed, a laboratory for learning care had landed on our doorstep and life-changing discoveries could occur which would not have happened in the isolation of the worshipping community.

Commentary

According to Groome's schema, reflection at Movement 1 (Naming / Expressing Present Praxis) reveals that from the outset, for the Methodists involved, their attitude towards accommodating persons other than church goers in their "sanctuary" reflects lack of concern for God's mission in the world. They show no appreciation for the other group's need of sanctuary. It is significant that the only feeble attempt towards reconciliation comes from the female head of the despised household. A woman regarded as marginal, it is not surprising that she displayed symptoms of powerlessness. Critical reflection at Movement 2 (Critical Reflection on Praxis) recognises that the more powerful churchgoers' intention to evict certain persons on the official basis of their misconduct would only serve to enforce the existing boundary between law abiding church goers and the lawless social class.

Reflection through Movement 2 into Movements 3 (Accessing Christian Story / Vision) and 4 (Dialectic Between Present Praxis and Christian Story / Vision) exposes the influence of missionary Christianity's disengagement with the political which is reflected in the complete absence of a theology of the Other that would help Christians to identify the stranger, or those who are different, with Christ. It is important to note that the request for eviction comes from laypersons (mostly men I recall), and so reveals that the emphasis on dominance extends beyond clerical circles. Their reference to church discipline is indicative of a high regard both for the legalistic framework and hierarchical structure of the church.

Behind this lies an ecclesiology of authoritarianism and exclusion consistent with historical church practice. From a sociological perspective, the church has been instrumental in perpetuating alienating religion. The sociological concept of alienating religion represents an attempt to expose social interests that underlie

XK: Both sides. Is not because we didn't move. Well you find we had the same stress and trauma. Not to the same magnitude, but you had your own things to deal with. (SXP1, February 16, 2003)

ideological justification for economic hierarchy, political oppression, patriarchal structures, ethnic stratification, and all else that contributes to social inequality. It points to

..the tendency of religious belief to disguise the economic and political interests of castes, classes, and genders behind a façade of objectivity... Alienating religion is a form of “false consciousness” militating against people’s sense of responsibility for establishing a just social order.¹⁰

This observation carries much weight in the context of the Caribbean. Not much has changed since Ashley Smith wrote:

The Christianity of the region is the religion of the conquerors and controllers. Religious beliefs and practices conform to the economic, social and political modes, norms and values.

The official theology of Caribbean Christianity is the means by which the socio-economic system and its underlying ideology are given sanctity and the domination of the majority rationalised.¹¹

In an ecclesiological sense, alienating religion corresponds to ‘the four aspects of change responsible for the de-motivation, disempowerment, and disqualification of persons for service’ which, according to Groome are ‘clerical, sacral, hierarchical and exclusive’ ministry¹².

Theologically, the church’s attitude presents a contradiction to the concern of pastoral care for affirming a common humanity through promoting relationships among persons and for celebrating God’s love for all. It further reveals a failure to remind participants of their responsibility for moral and ethical action as followers of Christ. Thirdly, by implication, the church ignores its prophetic functions and must be judged for its failure to encourage transformative action in the situation. In neglecting these three essential elements, pastoral practices have worked against the growth of human community which is the desired end of pastoral care. The end of theological reflection, Movement 5, is to determine Christian action reflective of the divine will in the situation.

¹⁰ Furniss, op. cit., p. 87

¹¹ Smith, A., *Emerging*, p. 11.

¹² Groome, op. cit. p.321

No room in our church

In the second year of the volcanic crisis, a young woman from one of the congregations for which I had pastoral responsibility was unjustly treated by another congregation. An unmarried mother and a Methodist, Grace lived in another church. Once when I visited her at the shelter, the problem of accommodation was spelt out. She was pregnant. Since her bed was in their church, the members assumed that she had engaged in illicit sexual activity in their sanctuary, and they wanted her out. They had explained this to the EOC, but, as they put it, the EOC managers were not Christian. They expected me, as a Christian pastor, to understand why Grace and her two daughters had to get out of their church. Through it all, there was no stated concern about Grace's sexual partner.

Interestingly, it was near Christmas. In relation to the nativity story, the incident served as a useful illustration for Methodists concerning their own responsibility for hospitality;¹³ but the harsh constraint of conventions that did not allow for ecumenical pastoral care remained, and these made life unbearable for persons like Grace. If the church was to serve the community well, different groups of Christians would have to work together to achieve the same goal.

Commentary

At Movement 1 there is already detectable a theology of a punitive God who favours an exclusive and overly pietistic church, and an emphasis on the privileged status of believers - their "chosenness" in Elaine Graham's terminology. These beliefs underlie the view that the decision to evict could be ethically correct. As in the previous example, exclusivity rather than vision of community is seen as normative.

In Montserrat, as elsewhere, perpetrators of such injustice resort to Biblicism in order to justify their actions. They demand strict conformity to selected scriptural standards without questioning the ideological interests these serve. The invisibility of Grace's sexual partner serves to underscore patriarchal influence in the determination of Christian values. Once again, the church's pastoral practice, by default, served to

¹³ Eventually, the Methodist congregation mentioned in the previous case came to Grace's rescue. In reflection on Grace's situation, persons became critical of their own actions during the previous year. They helped to build her a house on land adjacent to their chapel and supplied her family with electricity and running water. The experience of another congregation's tendency to exclusiveness had triggered their theological reflection and renewed praxis.

alienate a family that most needed acceptance, affirmation and support. These observations reflect a progression into Movements 2 and 3 of *shared Christian praxis*.

This particular instance of discord between Christian teaching and actual practice is best studied against the broader picture of the church's unloving stance towards single, pregnant women. In the face of historical reality that the majority of black Caribbean persons are born to unmarried parents, churches in the Caribbean continue to present the traditional Euro-American nuclear family as the normative family system for Christians. Panton's analysis of the church's response to family patterns in Jamaica from the post-Emancipation era to late twentieth century reveals a characteristic attitude of exclusion towards common law unions.¹⁴ These relationships, while not traditionally legally binding, often last for life. Their frequent occurrence suggests social acceptance. Edith Clarke's seminal research into family systems in Jamaica shows that legal/ Christian marriage was historically more a function of socio-economic stratification, with traditional legal marriages occurring more frequently among the higher income groups.¹⁵

A problem exists in that pastoral practices have tended to conform to some unchristian aspects of the broader culture of exclusivity while presenting a veneer of being critical of culture as justification for preventing the participation of those who do not fit in that culture. Theological reflection at Movement 4 suggests that pastoral care needs to be truly liberating in its concern to question societal mores where these run counter to the vision of the reign of God. To suggest that care be liberating is to require that it, at the very least, inspire political action with and on behalf of those for whom social constraints have become oppressive. Only in so doing does it prove relevant to the lives of those who have been excluded on the base of spiritual and moral values of the current social order.

Pastoral care, then, should be guided by a more inclusive theology of family informed by the real life situation. The call for attention to the broad social context of care can no longer go unheeded. This is especially needed given the contribution of

¹⁴ Panton, V., 1992, *The Church and Common Law Union*, Kingston, Jamaica, p.8

In a common-law union, a man and woman cohabit without having entered into a formal legal and/ or Christian marriage.

¹⁵ Clarke, E, 1966, *My Mother Who Fathered Me: A study of the family in three selected communities in Jamaica*, London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 79-90

feminist scholarship, which clearly reveals the relatedness between personal and political issues through examining such concerns among others as toxic familial relationships, changing family structures and parenting patterns. Pastoral practices based on the Caribbean church's suggestion that only the nuclear family constitutes a legitimate social structure for parenting violate the majority in populations where most persons have only a female parent. This sexist disregard for women who shoulder the bulk of parental responsibility constitutes a travesty to Christian teaching about the universal family of God. This recognition provides the thrust into Movement 5- Decision/ Response for Lived Christian Faith.

I will not relocate

Valerie is a forty-eight year old unmarried female, an accounting clerk who had previously lived with her family. During an encounter she disclosed that her only pregnancy had been terminated when she needed a hysterectomy. She visited the U.S at least once annually, but unknown to many, for medical reasons. That was the reason why she stayed at home in Montserrat. She felt that being a very sick woman, she needed to be near her family.

Deeply involved in the life of her previous congregation, she was a chorister and fundraiser. It was quite a surprise to the steward of her new congregation, St. Mark's, when Valerie strongly and angrily objected to her name being read as part of a committee listing one Sunday. That incident marked the beginning of the counselling relationship during which she disclosed the medical information above. I was worshipping at her church when the list was read. In discussions with Valerie and the local pastor, she admitted that her pastor had requested her assistance and that even though she had agreed to serve as a fundraiser, she was not ready to.

At the time, Valerie was living with another single but much older woman from her new congregation. She chose that woman not only because the latter had taken in no other relocated persons, but because her hostess' recurring illness made it easier to accept her own situation at a time when her own family members had decided to live abroad. Also, the arrangement provided a setting in which she could more openly pursue discussions about human mortality, a subject that weighed heavily on her consciousness. Valerie had no intentions of leaving Montserrat, but admitted her fear of dying in a stranger's house. She said: 'I'm sick and I could die at any time. That

was never a problem. But if I die now, I'm going to be a problem to somebody else and that's a big problem.'

She turned on her new congregation. 'That's what these church people don't understand. I have other things to worry about. I don't belong to St. Mark's. I belong to St. David's even though it will soon be burnt up. I'm not relocating inside Montserrat to this church, and I'm not relocating outside Montserrat to my family. That's my problem. I will not relocate.'

Valerie shared her conviction that 'the Lord has something else for me to do.' She was unhappy that the people at St. David's had seen her as useful 'only because I can make money for them.' In our discussions she spoke about the tension she felt because God was calling her to 'get into counselling.'¹⁶

How the church can help someone who had effectively balanced hopes of living with thoughts of dying, and who has to adjust to a new circle of support at precisely the time when that circle is only just learning to take death seriously? It might seem obvious that Valerie had skills other than fundraising expertise to share with her new congregation, but what skill would it take to understand that?

Commentary

At Movement 1 there is the church's tendency to view sick persons as careseekers, as needy recipients rather than as donor agents of pastoral care. Movements 2 and 3 stimulate thought that this is all part of its failure to actualize the priesthood of all believers. In Valerie's case, we are presented with someone whose past experience and present concern may well enhance her ability as a pastoral caregiver, a role traditionally assigned in actual practice to the ordained minister who holds greater power in the pastoral relationship. Yet her congregation is more interested in her abilities at fundraising, an aspect of ministry generally regarded as something peripheral, outside the purview of the pastoral leadership.

Within any helping process, there are inherent issues of power. It is conceivable that Valerie's experience in dealing with her mortality could somehow be threatening to

¹⁶ Valerie subsequently relocated to the UK because her medical condition deteriorated further. In 2005 she informed me that while her health was 'no good' she was 'plenty much better' because she had been assigned responsibility for a cell group of relocated Montserrattians who were deeply traumatised by loss of family members after they had migrated.

medically fit pastoral leaders lacking similar experience. If knowledge is understood as power, it presents challenge to these leaders in terms of its potential to dislodge the power imbalance in pastoral relationships of which she would be part.

Responsible exercise of power in pastoral care is implied in an understanding of pastoral ministry as the shared effort of pastor and congregation, since this demands focus on its charismatic nature. In theory, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers speaks of the Holy Spirit's enabling role in the life of believers as individuals in community. In practice, patriarchal influences concerning the exercise of power in organisations have tended to negate ministry as a discipleship of equals.

In her presentation of feminist dimensions of spiritual direction, Fischer offers perspectives that are equally useful for general pastoral care, even in the swiftly changing context of disaster where a counsellor may be required to assume more of a directive role than usual. She suggests a more equal relationship between helper and the one seeking direction, something akin to companionship on a journey. This, she believes

...reinforce[s] the truth that it is the Spirit who guides us, and that all those in the spiritual direction context stand under the Spirit's ultimate claim and mystery.¹⁷

If those involved in pastoral care recognise themselves as listening to the Spirit, individuals are better able to claim their own sense of authority while at the same time accepting that reciprocity belongs in any relationship that claims the Holy Spirit as guide. This perspective should help to counter the notion that the danger of individualism is an inevitable consequence of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. The teaching certainly does affirm the worth of individuals but of them as individual persons gifted for the good of persons and community. Christian perspectives on the charismatic derivation of human ability emphasise that giftedness is always linked to stewardship.

Reflection into Movement 4 clarifies the need for a pastoral approach which harnesses the varied caring potential of God's people for the good of all. Pastoral care as shared praxis is participatory for all concerned. Attitudes to the exercise of power within and between relationships should run counter to the Markian

¹⁷ Fischer, K., 1990, *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction*, London: SPCK, p. 18

understanding of Jesus' disciples who had to be warned 'not so among you.' While every organisation needs a structure that will help it to operate effectively, where that structure has become too dominating or too rigid, adjustment is necessary. An overly clerical emphasis can be amended as congregations acting together identify lay persons who bring valuable human resources to the pastoral task. Valerie's outburst of anger could possibly have been an indication of her frustration at being called upon to do fundraising just when the time was ripe for her involvement in pastoral care settings. It could also have meant that she was demanding pastoral attention. The task at Movement 5, then, is to determine ways for enabling lay believers to fulfil their priestly roles, thereby maximising the human resource potential of institutional churches.

Caring for the mentally ill - "she knows I'm sick"

Sarah is a twenty-eight year old schizophrenic who, prior to the volcanic eruptions, lived with her parents, their two sons, and her eleven year old son. After much resistance, she and her mother, also mentally ill, joined her father, one brother and son who had moved to her half-brother's residence in the safe zone. The children of this household were teenagers studying abroad so there was enough living space to accommodate the relocated family, plus Melanie, a close friend of the home owners. Anna, Sarah's sister-in-law, being a social worker, was careful to see that the mentally ill continued to take their prescribed medication. Given the crisis Anna worked very long hours but routinely took a daily refreshing walk with either her husband or Melanie.

After one week in the safe zone, Sarah started waking from sleep at 1:00 a.m. The first night she frantically called for Anna who came to her rescue. The sick woman thought that she was dying and was afraid to go back to bed; but with reassurance from her sister-in-law, she returned to bed and slept until late next morning. The scene was repeated over the next two nights. On the fourth night, Anna's husband, Jim, reportedly told his sister: 'She is not coming. You can die tonight if you want to. Leave my wife alone.'

During one of their leisure walks, Melanie disclosed an earlier conversation with Sarah. She had confronted Sarah about the fact that the latter was always fine during the daytime yet waking the hard-working Anna at night. To this her response was: 'She knows I'm sick so when I call she'll hurry and come.'

Jim was furious. He warned Sarah that if she continued to abuse his wife, he would ask her to leave. Their father, a highly respected lay preacher, was incensed. In his judgement, his son was being unchristian as evidenced in his cruelty to people who had no place else to go. It was wrong, he insisted, for him to show any preference for his wife over his sick sister since this gave the impression that his wife was more precious. As responsible hosts they were expected to make whatever sacrifices were necessary to ensure the comfort of their unfortunate relatives. The father boldly expressed the view that, for any of them, further relocation would be a sign of family disharmony which he would not allow. Having stated his position, the father called their pastor to “talk to” them.

Commentary

Where mentally ill persons are involved, the need for psychiatric intervention is easily obvious. But in the above situation, a number of issues are raised that require more than a strict clinical approach to healing. The need to foster mental and emotional health extended beyond Sarah and her mother, to the host couple as well. Their marital relationship, it seemed, was being put under intense and unnecessary strain by the father’s harsh authoritarian demands.

At Movement 1 of *shared Christian praxis*, the father’s desire to preserve an appearance of harmonious family relationship is recognised as problematic. A prominent member of the Christian community, he was more concerned to “look good” in the eyes of neighbours and friends, even if that meant unnecessary discomfort for the son and his spouse. Movement 2 brings the realization that his demands for Jim’s strict conformity to parental expectations show a lack of caring concern for the quality of the hosts’ marital relationship. This is precisely the kind of problem identified by Au where persons seek after an unattainable perfection and become ashamed of the limitations and flaws that are inherently human. In such situations, Christian holiness is understood as perfect attainment of virtues, so that a person’s efforts are directed at living a life of faultless obedience and requiring the same of others rather than on maintaining good quality relationships. Instead, holiness should be understood in terms of developing the capacity to love as God

does, 'not a pursuing of individual excellence through perfect obedience but sincere imitation of Christ's life of love and service'.¹⁸

Au's insights take the reflection through Movement 3 and into Movement 4. At Movement 5 the expectation is an informed decision congruent with Christian faith. In the real life situation, the fact that the pastor was called in to "talk to" the ones perceived to be the offending party gives little cause for hope. Anna and Jim were seen as selfish and uncaring when, in reality, they had been subjected to abuse. They were severely chastised, not only by their pastor but by several other pastoral leaders from their congregation.

It is not unusual to encounter attitudes similar to that shown by Sarah's father and by the leaders in his church. This is common in places such as Montserrat where pastoral approaches have placed excessive emphasis on sacrifice and submission as indicative of Christian virtue. Often, when persons feel unable to cope with the harsh demands imposed by uncaring authority figures at home or in church, they are made to feel guilty. When they do, the burden of guilt may weigh heavily on them and become an obstacle to their liberation as human persons. In my own case, there were the harsh and unjust demands of my superiors who seemed oblivious to my need for reflection and rest. What this oppressive tendency really reveals is a failure to pattern human caring after God's unconditional love for humankind (Movement 4).

Larry Graham explains how destructive the lack of loving communion is to families. They may either become enmeshed, denying members the freedom to develop psychologically and socially, or they may be disengaged, providing little by way of affection and interaction. Within the family and in the larger social arena, the failure to love also encourages the acceptance of the 'double-standard [which] holds one person or group accountable for values from which the other is exempted.'¹⁹

This is essentially a theological problem where persons fail to consider their equal worth as humans and not something that can be addressed effectively through any single clinical approach. It is possible however, that Sarah's father, like his wife and daughter, could be helped by a psychotherapeutic approach since an exploration of his upbringing might prove useful in the situation.

¹⁸ Au, W., 1995, *Urgings of the Heart: A Spirituality of Integration*, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, p. 75

¹⁹ Graham, L., op. cit., p.163-4

The need for referral is judged best where the pastoral caregiver is aware of the benefits of the human clinical sciences. Sometimes a strong case exists for using psychoanalysis even where the problem seems to be largely a theological one. Take the case where conflict is rooted in a church leader's hostility towards God. If a careseeker in a counselling relationship sees that same pastoral caregiver as a representative of God, negative transference in the relationship is potentially explosive.²⁰ At least initially, it may prove useful for another therapist to explore psychological dynamics in a more "neutral" setting.

A sense of humility on the part of pastoral caregivers facilitates their critical acceptance of clinical insights for counselling. As Ashbrook puts it,

If all human experience expresses and reflects universal structures of personhood, then clinical experience has a contribution to make to Biblical-theological understandings.²¹

But to suggest that pastoral caregivers value and apply clinical skills does not imply their complete reliance on psychology and psychotherapy. In reality, genuine warmth of personality on the part of the counsellor does more to facilitate the development of a life promoting relationship than does the application of taught methods. This is the point made by Pembroke who gives the place of priority to the art of listening. He underscores the need for persons who can accurately communicate a genuinely loving presence that facilitates relationship. While recognising the value of technical expertise, he argues that 'in pastoral relationships availability is before skills and techniques and confirmation is beyond acceptance and empathy.'²² Foskett also stresses the need for a sort of 'risky openness' which facilitates genuine encounter with others and promises a more liberating existence.²³

Other theologians also address this need for availability through the theme of presence. Nouwen sees the minister as a living reminder of Christ who heals, sustains, and guides persons in community. Such memory can be inspired whether or not the pastor is physically present, given that a 'certain unavailability is essential for

²⁰ Armistead, K., 1995, *God-Images in the Healing Process*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p. 124

²¹ quoted by Kae-je, 1993, in "Psychologist or Theologian? Pastoral Counseling, Supervision, and Professional Identity", *J. Past. Care*, 47, p. 67

²² Pembroke, N., 2002, *The Art of Listening: Dialogue, Shame, and Pastoral Care*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, p.3-5

²³ Foskett, op. cit., p.135

the spiritual life of a minister.²⁴ The minister as living reminder focuses more on being than on doing, less on technical mastery and practical skill and more on sustaining spirituality that communicates presence.²⁵ Campbell concentrates on the 'mediation of steadfastness and wholeness' as distinct from competence or insight. This, he insists, depends on 'the immediacy of our bodily presence not on counselling techniques.'²⁶

Pembroke builds on Buber's argument that caregivers need to address issues of existential guilt, and shows that the stimulation of conscience has an important part in pastoral care.²⁷ What has happened in practice, though, is that pastoral care has often maintained the power imbalance existing in the wider society. Pastors have themselves used their power advantage to preserve the status quo by failing to confront the more powerful. Reflection at Movement 2 suggests that this is what happened in the above situation with the visiting father expecting his hosts to exercise good conscience but seemingly remaining unaware of his own responsibility to do the same.

Poling's explanation of the problem as a theological one is a useful resource at Movements 3 and 4.

Abuse of power for the individual is motivated by fear and by the resulting desire to control the power of life. This fear and arrogance are then used to create societies in which structures of domination create special possibilities for the privileged at the expense of shared power for all persons. The power that is intended by God for everyone who lives is used to destroy relationships in exchange for control. Rather than live in insecurity, some persons choose to create structures that dominate and control others for personal gratification and false security.²⁸

In the situation being discussed, the father's fear of losing prestige in society and respect among the church hierarchy is one factor motivating his actions.²⁹ He wants

²⁴ Nouwen, H., 1977, *The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ*, N. Y. : Seabury – Crossroad, p.49

²⁵ Pembroke, *The Art of Listening*, p.25

²⁶ Campbell, *Rediscovering*, p.16

²⁷ Pembroke, *The Art of Listening*, p.7

²⁸ Poling, J., op. cit., p.77

²⁹ It is likely that there are several contributory factors. The level of dysfunction in this family is high. The father's preoccupation with the illness of the two women in his immediate family, his frustration on losing the security of his own home, and his possible resentment towards Anna would have

to exercise complete control, and that at the expense of everyone else involved. The pastor and other pastoral leaders do not offer Christian perspectives to address the problem since they fail to stimulate the offender to act in a morally responsible manner. Rather, they support the father's unjust use of power over the host couple.

Awareness of how power dynamics operate in individuals and society including its religious aspects is vital for the pastor who wants to challenge injustice within self and society. This means that s/he must examine clearly her or his assumptions about power. No one comes to the task devoid of formative influences and prejudices with respect to the exercise of power. Only insofar as s/he is prepared to come to terms with ambiguities and inconsistencies in her or his own person, is the clergy or lay leader in pastoral relationships able to demonstrate genuine compassion and facilitate personal healing.

Where pastoral care sensitively confronts the powerful, thereby stimulating conscience, both psychological and social benefits are derived. The approach calls a person both to maintain her or his personal integrity and to restore right relations with others. This latter role is fulfilled only as restitution is made to actual persons, a facet missing from the pastoral approach taken with Anna and her husband who were left to deal with the ingratitude shown by their relatives. Yet this couple were not alone in their experience of such treatment during the volcanic crisis.

In the focus group meetings, relocated residents expressed anger at some of the families who had housed them. One benefit was that in the research setting the northern residents had opportunity to share sentiments similar to those felt by Anna and Jim, and to explain the hurt they had endured because so many, including church persons, had misunderstood and often maligned them. The following extracts from meetings of SXP1 illustrate this.

XH: This volcano let us see the other side of many people.

XW: You go to their house and you with them. They not speaking to you...You just uncomfortable in some people house during the volcano when you have to move.

XT: I didn't relocate.

XA: ...you have to bear in mind ...you gave up your sense of freedom. I had people living with me. I wasn't free. I was just, gave

complicated the situation. The issue of power is explored since it is one factor present here as in several other pastoral cases encountered in this research.

up all I had to make somebody happy...gave up my room to somebody. I couldn't ...put up my things and they had theirs where they wanted to...You just couldn't do the things you wanted to do because they were always, there were always people around.

(SXP 1, February 16, 2004)

The first two speakers had relocated while the last two hosted relocated persons. The issue resurfaced in a subsequent meeting of the same group.

XK: When the crisis started, my house had just finished...is about 30 people I put up, young people working by there...I cooked for them. I paid their water. I did everything. When we had those 2 hurricanes back to back, I told this young guy to pull down a shed and bar the windows. I left morning. When I come back at 6 o'clock it was still there...they playing music...

XH: No. That is terrible!

XK: After that I said...you all do it where you live ...but not by us.

XW: Yes!

XH: But you were right!

XK: So what I'm saying, you have that kind of thing as well, that sometimes it is always believed that those of us from out here, that we are not considerate. But sometimes the things have been done to you, that first experience, the second time...

XG: They took advantage of the situation.

XK: The tub fixtures were not attached. I tell them don't use it, the something not attached. They still go up there and full it with water. Get cigarettes, burn up a hole

XH: That is terrible man!

XK: I had to change one of the counters. Up to now some of them still have the marks in it...that type of thing. So when the second time come, although you were sharing with people and everything, when the second time come, I wasn't really keen to have anybody in mi house.

EH: Because the first set of people just make your life miserable. And you think that the other people is the same so you don't

XK: But that don't stop me from still putting up a whole bunch of dem again, even though me warn dem

MG: You have a heart.

CK: I'm trying to show me Jesus.

(SXP1, March 01, 2004)

In the exchanges recorded here, both groups called each other to proper exercise of conscience, so that the focus group sessions became opportunities for social healing

as they offered a forum in which participants could explore some sources of justifiable anger that many felt.

Emigration of the Disabled: a mother trying her best

It was February 1997. Every month since the previous September, I went to administer the Lord's Supper to Margaret and her thirty-four year old daughter, Susan, who lived in a small wooden house in Caesar's Village. Susan's older brothers had all married and left home, except for Carl who was studying in Florida. Although a paraplegic from birth, Susan was widely known in the community because she sent frequent letters to a gospel radio station in a nearby island. Her brothers, who used to visit often, had taught her to read and to write. But with the volcano erupting, they no longer visited. The eldest had returned to the UK where all the siblings were born. Another had migrated elsewhere in the Caribbean. The one who remained in Montserrat was a taxi operator whose business was, like so many others, in decline due to the volcanic crisis. His mother described him as being 'as selfish as his dead father'; and there was Carl who worked at nights to pay for his full-time studies.

Margaret and her husband had returned to Montserrat in the 1960s. He died a few years later. She provided for herself and her children by selling surplus produce from Montserrat in the neighbouring islands. After the 1970s decline in agricultural production, she took to selling vegetables at home. She continued her sole occupation into the period of volcanic eruptions even though there were hardly any vegetables to sell and many of her clients were leaving the island.

During one of my visits, Margaret confided that she had tried her very best and saved some money. She was hoping to leave Montserrat since she feared that Susan could not cope with life in a shelter, and it seemed as if their village would soon be evacuated. I needed only a quick calculation to realize that this woman's life savings would not fund travel abroad. But she was a very proud woman who wanted neither the church nor the Department of Community Services to be privy to her poverty. She would not admit to a government agency that she received no financial support from her sons. She was a hard-working huckster who had successfully raised them, schooled them, and was doing well with survival, as far as everyone in her small community knew. Margaret was right in that for survival, she would need to take her daughter abroad. I somehow convinced her that the Governor's Office was

sufficiently removed from local agencies to handle her case privately and sought her permission to negotiate with this agency that she would not, on her own, dare to engage.

One year later, Susan had raised five hundred pounds for a housing project in Montserrat. She sent the money from her new home in Birmingham where she had received tuition in word processing. She had printed one of her poems and the effort was supported by various persons in the Methodist Church that she was attending. Margaret still remembers her good, hard life in Montserrat but will continue to live in Britain for the sake of her daughter. I often wonder what would have happened had her pastor not taken the job of advocate.

No one else was placed to do so, not even social workers, because she would not have admitted the truth of her situation to anyone but a minister of her church.

Commentary

When one considers the positive outcome of Margaret's decision to migrate insofar as it relates to Susan, there is some sort of validation that, in the particular situation, it was the right thing to do. But such action could not have been taken without the political engagement on the part of the pastor. A non-directive counselling approach which simply accepted Margaret's lack of preparedness to take the necessary action would in no way approximate to the requirement in that situation. It was not a question of social reform even though that was needed, because Margaret would not have confided in a social worker at the time.

Margaret is representative of many church goers for whom the trust placed in the church's pastoral leadership is not readily transferred to representatives of other helping professions. In such situations where quick response is required, it may be counterproductive to suggest that these persons develop new counselling relations with other professionals. Agencies responsible for social welfare may carefully enlist trained professional counsellors, but the latter sometimes face rejection by persons seeking a religious dimension in the counselling process. This element has surfaced in different communities facing disaster. Even where persons may not be overtly religious, their criticisms of counsellors are telling. That this is not merely a Montserrat experience is indicated by the following comments from survivors of the Lockerbie airline disaster of December 1989:

Well I think that is one of the things we found out with the would-be counsellors the first day or two when we came back. They were a nuisance!

I had one counsellor who came and asked if we needed help. He was a little youngster, may have been in his early twenties, and had a large earring in one ear. And he sat on the couch and cried. I had to counsel him. I felt so sorry for him. He was just completely out of it then. He couldn't cope with that... Well I think so, because he was very young. I think that he probably wouldn't have met much in the way of life's experiences as yet anyway.

there were all sorts of intrusions,... when they were just better off left just where they were and left to get on with it. You know, you had to sort all this out and to fill out all sorts of psychological papers which were left...

And we decided that we would have all the people to our house just to give them an evening to sit them up to see if they had anything to say to each other, since they hadn't been able to see each other. And we had a job! ...we discovered that the social workers were wanting to come with them and join in the party. You know, when in actual fact we didn't really think about having social workers and all of that!

(Lockerbie interviews, May 28-29, 2003)

The lack of readiness shown by these persons to confide in counsellors acting on behalf of agencies other than the church is telling. It may well be that these people have internalised an attitude that characterises much of Christian ministry - a failure to acknowledge the grace of God operative beyond the church. It may, on the other hand, indicate that Christian pastoral care does include an irreplaceable dimension - the faith perspective that is absent in the work of some care mediating agencies. It makes a case for Christian pastoral care, *but it requires that pastoral caregivers balance a more directive role when that is called for, with a more corporate approach to caring in general*. How well the church exercises this aspect of its ministry is inextricably linked to the embodiment of its priesthood in the members of its faith communities. Maybe the single greatest challenge facing ordained leadership of Christian churches today is their responsibility to encourage believers individually and collectively to exercise the priesthood into which they have been called.

In the Montserrat volcanic disaster, everyone needed pastoral care as these visiting British caregivers recognised.

BM1: We came to see that there wasn't anybody who didn't need support: that was the general situation of all the churches there. I'm sure that official pastors and lay pastors, and teachers, and leaders,

BM2: and aid workers

BM1: The whole community needed pastoral support. You hadn't got anybody who didn't. So the pastoral support had to come from outside for them...

BM2: I know it's a metaphor too easily used, but with hindsight, and not particularly hindsight, I think we very quickly became aware that we were receiving far more than we were able to give.

(Interview, June 29, 2004)

The fact that visiting ministers noted how they 'very quickly became aware that [they] were receiving far more than [they] were able to give' shows that persons experiencing loss were still capable of giving pastoral care. But while everyone needed to be cared for, not all those able were really accepted as or encouraged to be pastoral caregivers. In the chapters that follow, we seek means of helping persons to actualise the priesthood of believers through participation in pastoral care.

Pastoral Care in Disaster: A Theological Reflection

Chapter Five: Analysis of Pastoral Care in the Montserrat Volcanic Crisis. Part One

Introduction

At first reading, each of the situations described in the previous chapter might seem to be an isolated and bewildering mix of events not representative of the usual problems encountered in the practice of pastoral care, even in the context of disaster. But the complexity in each instance is largely due to the fact that the situation represents the intersection of several concerns - behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, intuitions - that pastors faced in the day to day exercise of pastoral practices in the disaster setting. From the Montserrat experience, each is truly a representative case.

The issues encountered in Chapter Four were repeatedly replayed in the research setting. Some of those most intensely reflected on are further discussed and analysed in three thematic reflections that follow. These are (1) *the challenge of difference*, (2) *the prophetic role in pastoral care* and (3) *maximising the church's institutional potential*. Each reflection follows the theological method of *shared Christian praxis*, that is, proceeding from *Movement 1: Naming / Expressing Present Praxis* through to *Movement 5: Decision / Response for Lived Christian Faith*. As it proceeds, attention is paid to the intersecting concerns and issues that are reflected in the participants' theological definition of their situation.

In the focus groups, participants reviewed the problems identified in relation to each theme and reflected on these on different occasions. When all the group data is brought together, theological reflection from the first through to the fourth movement of the selected methodology is detectable, and resources are gleaned to assist the researcher through to Movement 5. For the three theological reflections presented each of the five movements is treated separately. In general, reflections by research participants are substantiated by statements, gestures or other expressions. Relevant portions of statements are sometimes repeated to help the reader follow the train of thought. Where no transcribed material from interviews and discussions is presented to indicate otherwise, the researcher's subsequent reflection through these movements is given.

To assist the reader, I repeat here some information given in the chapter on methodology. In the transcripts that follow, CH is the designation for the most senior clergy person for any given communion. CL is used for a church appointed lay leader, CoL for a community leader, and A for someone representing the arts. For interviews and focus group meetings, contributions by the researcher are indicated by an asterisk (*) while research participants from the *shared Christian praxis* focus groups are each identified by two letters. Members of SXP1 have the letter X included. Similarly, Y is used for SXP2 and Z for SXP3.

1. The challenge of difference

The southern areas of Montserrat had been identified as the most vulnerable to the impact of volcanic activity. For periods ranging from a few days to several weeks during 1995 and 1996, groups of residents from the south were twice relocated to northern villages. From April 1997 a third and final evacuation of southern areas was started. By June of that year, only the northern third of the island was officially occupied.¹ While this meant considerable inconvenience for all, persons who had resided in the north prior to the onset of disaster provided hospitality, physically and otherwise, for those moving into these areas. But the aspiration of different groups to live in harmony was not easily realised.

This observation was stated in the previous chapter and illustrated with transcripts including the portion below.

XH: This volcano let us see the other side of many people.

XW: You go to their house and you with them. They not speaking to you...You just uncomfortable in some people house during the volcano when you have to move.

(SXP1, February 16, 2004)

The statement about ‘the other side of people’ is given as an indictment. The recognition of the unresolved need to face the challenge of difference, or the tendency to exclude the Other, was universal. This concern was first voiced early in interviews with church leaders, lay and ordained. The matter resurfaced and was further explored in focus group discussions. The difficulty is described by a religious leader.

¹ Despite repeated warnings and offers of assistance to relocate, several residents continued to live and/or to farm in the evacuated zone. 20 of them died during the fatal eruption of June 25, 1997.

Worshipping together. I'm telling you, that is something to be on record...then I was able to prove Christians, that some of them were only church goers. These on this side of the island refused to embrace those that had to leave the danger zone. They refused to accept them; and in the church they were so divided. Because the people from [St. Basil] thought 'Oh, they come from [St. Cyprian's]...to take over from us, and all that sort of thing. But you find some real valuable persons coming from the different churches but these in [St. Basil], they would never accept them. We had such a challenge, such a time to get them to accept...the newcomers.'²

(CH-A)

Movement 1: Naming/ Expressing Present Praxis

Present Praxis in the Congregation

At the first movement the stated problem 'the other side of many people' is one group's refusal to accept the other. This is undesirable because of its factious potential in the congregation, a feature easily diagnosed as unchristian: 'I was able to prove Christians, that some of them were only church goers...'

Present Praxis in the Wider Society

The issue of divisiveness was not a concern limited to congregations, but rather reflective of praxis in the wider society. As stated before, during the volcanic crisis there were unusually high levels of dissention in other areas of Montserratian society. While the presence of mistrust and excessive assignment of blame are common features of traumatised persons (*crisis and commotion*), and while, arguably, in Montserrat collective cultural memory of slavery and colonialism (*cultural connotation / history hooks*) may have stimulated dissention, too much energy was expended on the felt need to resist external advice (*political praxis*)³. Sometimes there were valid concerns that the media was misleading people. In other situations there was senseless propaganda to be defused. Also, a lot of early miscommunication hinged on the unavailability of scientists for information programmes for the local population (*social situation*).⁴ The relationship between the local government and

² St. Cyprian and St. Basil are fictitious names.

³ The codes bracketed and in italics indicate the features referred to in Chapters 2 (p.76-77) and 3 (p. 82) as useful for informing a pastoral theology.

⁴ Ignorant of local cultural codes, scientists at the MVO insisted on their role as a strictly scientific one, and initially resisted direct encounters with the public. The local population felt that information was being withheld and this provoked much tension in Montserrat.

HMG was fraught with difficulty sometimes as a direct consequence of the wealthier body's unwillingness to entertain dialogue with the poorer one (*political praxis*). But in retrospect it seems that the frequency of quarrels between various sectors only served to worsen the crisis (*hindsight helps*).

Strained relations between Montserrat and HMG were but a mirror of the local situation. Rather than face the escalating volcanic eruptions together, groups were polarised and attempted to blame one another for failures of all sorts. Islanders blamed outsiders for misunderstanding local resistance to evacuation, and some suspected that incoming experts wanted to displace them. At the island level, the political directorate was blamed for mismanagement of the disaster situation, scientists were insulted for their inability to predict exactly the subsequent course of events, and disaster management personnel were accused of being unconcerned about trauma that residents had to endure. Tensions mounted between different communities on island as energies were concentrated on assigning blame rather than on facilitating dialogue between the parties concerned. The atmosphere is well described in the third stanza of *Keep the Faith*.⁵

Movement 2: Critical Reflection on Present Action

Exclusiveness

Critical reflection on praxis as stated at Movement 1 - one group's refusal to accept the other - uncovers what is less obvious, that St. Basil's defensive stance mirrors the historical church's attitude towards outsiders (*history hooks*). The tendency to exclusiveness persists in spite of apparent ecumenical fervour in church circles. The undervaluing of the gifts and graces from St Cyprian is similar to the church's denial of the tremendous human resource potential available from sources beyond itself.

Disregard for persons' psychological and social needs

In viewing the non-relocated church goers as deviant Christians, their pastor, maybe unknowingly, chooses to ignore the social and psychological needs of both groups and of the persons comprising them. Another congregational head who herself had to

⁵ Greenaway, R. "Keep the Faith". See Appendix 1.7.

relocate, reflects from a different perspective - the newcomers' task of socialisation in an already unstable setting (*social situation*).

I think socially because for those of us who had to come over this side didn't know [the people over here] in an intimate way, it was still a getting to know. You know that they were over here, but you didn't have that bond so it was difficult to really to start over, so that was a little social barrier, so that with all the stress you had to be feeling your way into new relationships. (CH-B)

As one lay leader implies below, the newcomers need but lack a sense of belonging which cannot develop overnight.

But what I find is that they never, even up to now, they never really seem to think that it's their church. You'd be surprised to know that there are still some saying 'ah, we hoping that Cork Hill will be reopened'...There are some people who have thrown themselves in and [are] operating as if it's OK but then that again depends on the personality...I believe it's going to change a bit as time moves on and they realise they're here to stay, and some people, the older ones move out and they'll realise that they have a commitment.

(CL-C)

A deeper reading of her statement shows, however, that relocated persons were expected to integrate naturally without effort on the part of their new neighbours, just as did those 'who have thrown themselves in and [are] operating as if it's OK'. The onus is completely on the ones who need to find their way in the new environment. This may happen when 'they realise they're here to stay'. The removal of obstacles issuing from personal sources will only happen by default as 'the older ones move out'.⁶ The social task of integration is not presented as the shared responsibility of both groups.

A third denominational head, also relocated, attempts to explain the problem from the viewpoint of those expected to suddenly accommodate difference.

That was a tremendous challenge, major challenge, actually. Because you're talking about people from Long Ground, Harris', Dyers', Plymouth, Cork Hill, Salem and Cudjoe Head. So that in itself was a real challenge. Well it really took us some time to finally...get some space because of the permanent [nature of the relocation]. Some who actually felt threatened...That was their building. Naturally, what happened here is that you had quite a number of people coming from the other assemblies which were more developed, more addicted to [passionate about] ministry and I always say, as the pastor, you want to use your best people when it comes to ministry... So in that sense

⁶ reference to the aging and death of elderly members

they were not as involved as in when they had their own little local thing on their own...So that in itself raised certain feelings that wasn't the best.
(CH-D)

The non-relocated feel threatened. For one thing, other people's entry into their situation exposes their inadequacies and may well rob them of the opportunity to continue fulfilling the social roles previously assigned them. The pastor states clearly that he values the talent coming from 'the other assemblies which were more developed'. There might possibly be resentment on the part of those who feel threatened. They resist as humans tend to naturally.

Another church leader explores the burden placed on leadership in the situation. His statements reveal his greater sensitivity to issues of socialisation. For him the challenge is not insurmountable if pastors are willing 'to find ways and means to really bring people together'. What one may describe as 'individualism' may well relate to the personal need for an 'identity'. That being the case, the differences seen as problematic may be desirable. So, in the final analysis, 'you can still find the differences coming out'.

Additionally, persons have their ways, in terms of...customs, the way they did things that way, and more so since we now have an integrated community, For example, you would have had...the Methodists from Bethel area, those from Plymouth, who now would have to get into the grouping of let's say Cavalla Hill, Judy Piece...one would see that they still tend to stick with each other...And to some extent, although they are all Methodists, their style of doing things, the way they worship, the way they do certain things are different.

* yes

...and it makes pastoral work very difficult, because you would have been expecting that all of us being of the same faith would have had a common understanding of the way we do things. And so, even in that setting you had to find ways and means to really bring people together, and even in so doing, you can still find the differences coming out, by virtue of attitude, you know, the way they say things, the way they want to do things, they want to still hold on to their identity, or their individualism if you want to put it that way. And so, if you're coming from outside into that setting, plus the other persons who also coming in, they're now realising we have what you call a pepperpot there.
(CH-E)

CH-E's statement above, 'you had to find ways and means to really bring people together' suggests that this pastor's congregation has journeyed through Movements 3 and 4 (*hindsight helps*). He expresses a readiness to do things differently. His

posture reflected by the entire congregation's stance towards newcomers both from within and outside Montserrat, is noteworthy. In Movement 3, I present an excerpt from a second interview in which I addressed the matter directly.

Movement 3: Accessing Christian Story/ Vision

Below we find further remarks which support the assessment that the congregation has accessed Christian Story / Vision and has placed new perspectives in dialogue with its accustomed ways of doing things (*theological thinking*). The evidence includes such comments as 'we have been able to demonstrate a level of... love and assurance to them', 'the way that we would have gone about demonstrating that love and that appreciation seemed to make them feel settled and welcome', 'we had to find a middle ground to make everybody comfortable even in the worship setting', 'there had to be [accommodation], because... the whole idea of soul winning is to be able to speak where the people are' and 'you now have to pull out all your pastoral skills to really meet all those conditions or circumstances' (*theological thinking-personal positions*). The hospitality needs in the context demanded personal adjustment in the exercise of power on the part of those already at home. They had to yield some control and where necessary, give up or at least adjust their preferred ways of doing things, for example, singing.

* Last time, I had asked specifically about your approach to the new wave of people who have migrated to assist with the crisis, since it is noticeable that a significant number of them are members of your congregation.

CH-E: Yes, thank you for making note of that particular point of observation

* Although I'm not here, I've been so told. (*laugh*)

CH-E: I take it that one of the secrets, if you want to put it that way, is the location, and secondly the fact that we have been able to demonstrate a level of...love and assurance to them, given the fact that they have moved to Montserrat, and have chosen to be here, and hence we feel that if they are going to be part of the society, that they need to be part of a community of believers.

* OK

CH-E: Additionally, the way that we would have gone about demonstrating that love and that appreciation seemed to make them feel settled and welcome. And what has happened is that they of themselves do some level of evangelism, of work, so the word gets around. I'm pretty sure by your own experience you would know that mouth evangelism

* is effective

CH-E: Yes, it's one of the most effective ways of winning persons. And so, that basically, is one of the things which would have had them there. Also think of that people seemingly move in little packs, or groups, and so where you find a part grouping, they seem to move towards that, and so we used that also by forming them into little groups where they minister basically to

* to one another?

CH-E: Yea, to one another. You see, their culture is different, in more ways than one.

* Yea.

CH-E: And even though we are all Caribbean people, we do things differently. As a matter of fact, even in our worship style, we had to adapt to meet them, because even some songs they were accustomed to, the way they sang them, we sang them differently, and so we had to find a middle ground to make everybody comfortable, even in the worship setting.

* So there was some accommodation on your part.

CH-E: Well, there had to be because, you'll agree, the whole idea of soul winning is to be able to speak where the people are, and to be able to get them involved in the work of the Lord.

* You mentioned the differences in culture, even though we're all Caribbean people

CH-E: Yea, and you now have to pull out all your pastoral skills to really meet all those conditions or circumstances.

As the conversation continues, the third movement is clearly visible in the minister's references to the Corinthian church's problem of divisiveness and his rendering of the body imagery – 'the finger, the little and the big thumb' (*theological reflection-bible bases*).

* But in retrospect, you would say, you coped.

CH-E: Yes. You had to (*emphasis*) because it is work of ministry you're doing. And I think that you are now better able to appreciate what Paul was saying. You don't need to say I am of Apollos, I am of Paul, I'm of this, I'm of that, but you recognise that we are all part of the building

* of one body

CH-E: of the body, and hence that we need to understand that the finger, the little and the big thumb, they don't serve the same purpose, and there is unity even in diversity.

*I kind of know what you're talking about, having to take people from distinctly different, some of them with a high church orientation. Maybe you didn't have that in your congregation.

CH-E: To some extent, because some churches from the south had been more developed than the others, both from an intellectual standpoint and from the prestigious standpoint. And so you must appreciate that that they would still want to hold on to their identity. And so in bringing everything together, much as you may want to encourage unity, you would still find that people were still ...moving towards their little groups, and want to hold on to their identity, even it is no longer there.

(2nd interview with CH-E, March 23, 2004)

In recognising that 'they of themselves do some level of evangelism', CH-E emphasises their value in the congregation. He focuses on the worth of persons as well as on the corporate nature of ministry and its charismatic functions. Ministry must be inclusive, communicating acceptance of persons through attending to their needs and affirming the dignity of their difference. As humans, they have both psychological and social needs to be met. Their response as active participants working together is valuable for themselves both individually and collectively.

Movement 4: Dialectical Hermeneutic to Appropriate Christian Story/ Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions

Reflection into Movement 4 calls for greater valuing of diversity. There is an unambiguous expression of this need. 'There is unity even in diversity'. The pastor's statement about his own desire for unity correlates with the corporate vision of research participants. It is precisely because they value 'unity in diversity' that the failure to respect the dignity of difference is so troubling (*theological thinking*). It contradicts what they proudly profess about Montserrat and Montserratians being a close community where 'we think that we are in communion each other and we share' (*cultural connotations*) as stated in the SXP2 transcript below.

Issues of Group Identity

Branches of contemporary Christianity try to retain features that preserve each group's distinctive identity. This seems important for groups in the Montserratian setting where people join regularly in worship and service activities of communions other than their own. Only through participation in one's own church programmes can any denominational allegiance can be encouraged since the different branches of Christianity as separate institutions, cannot reverse the cultural trend of movement between churches.

The high level of local ecumenism does not remove denominations' official search for distinctiveness (*church connections*). In my own communion, the Methodist Church, for example, the question posed as the sine qua non concerning every preacher, lay or ordained, is 'Does s/he believe and preach our doctrines *and nothing contrary to them?*' (Italics mine). While there is nothing wrong with insistence on doctrinal or other standards, these have tended to foster dualistic attitudes among members of particular groups. At the institutional church level, an either/or mindset is prized. People have not been encouraged to appreciate the wide range of options available in life, so that in highly pressurised crisis conditions it seems unthinkable to expect that they accommodate the very differences they have long learned to exclude, and that paradoxically, in a community that seems to cherish its common bonds. But the stage was already set and *the crisis was itself a catalyst for change, provided that persons received the necessary material and spiritual support to see them through an adjustment period.*

A return to the rebuttal of the problem statement in the focus group setting shows that there is hurt endured by those expected to accommodate others.

XA: ...some people were saying that we - when you go to church people were saying that we were not very accommodating, I find that people can make your life miserable...

XK: ...you have that kind of thing as well, that sometimes it is always believed that those of us from out here, that we are not considerate. But sometimes the things have been done to you, that 1st experience, the second time... (SXP1, February 16, 2003)

The situation was further complicated by the magnitude of personal accommodation required from those who were themselves adjusting to the state of disaster (*crisis and commotion*). It was not just welcoming strangers from one locality but they faced a range of differences; and each incoming group expected its particular needs to be met at the expense of those whose only fortune was their opportunity to continue occupying their own residences.

The statement below gives some idea of how accommodating people needed to be. For that denomination, the seven congregations named would merge with the eight whose building was available. Most communions had fewer congregations to merge, except for the Methodist Church which had members of nine congregations placed into two. But all churches lamented the same problem.

That was a tremendous challenge, major challenge, actually. Because you're talking about people from Long Ground, Harris', Dyers',

Plymouth, Cork Hill, Salem and Cudjoe Head. So that in itself was a real challenge. (CH- D)

In addition to the demands placed on those who remained at home, the reality of their trauma was downplayed, since efforts had to be concentrated on helping those in greatest distress.

XK: So what I'm saying, you have that kind of thing as well...that we are not considerate...

XG: But what I find, there is this little thing at certain places where they quick to say 'you all', 'you all who come over here' and I don't like it.

XA: But that is a natural human thing. That will come out. Human error. That woulda come out if we had go on the other side as well. All of us get headly with people.⁷

XG: They tend to say that we taking over. We're not taking over. We are helping.

XK: Admittedly. Admittedly. In some areas, a lot of people try to take over.

XH: Yes, some people does.

XW: Let me talk. Let me talk.

XK: If you look sharp, they take over you own house. (*Group laughs*)

* We are recognising that there were needs on both sides of the equation.

XK: Both sides. Is not because we didn't move...we had the same stress and trauma. Not to the same magnitude, but you had your own things to deal with. (SXP1, February 16, 2003.)

Here, the reader gets an idea of the rejection felt by evacuees who just wanted to fit in and the anger of those who felt trampled over by assertive newcomers. It would seem that the unrealistic demands of the relocated, as encountered in the case of Sarah's family and documented in Chapter Four, was as problematic as the other group's lack of readiness to accept them. The crisis situation called for a give and take on either side. A more adequate model of pastoral care (at Movement 5) would need to assist both groups in crossing the boundaries of their subcultures.

Pembroke's proposal for respectful listening that facilitates relationship through communicating a truly loving presence and Foskett's invitation to a 'risky openness' which promotes genuine encounter with others are useful resources to consider here

⁷ "get headly"- become impatient, inconsiderate or irrational

in the dialectic between present praxis and *Christian Story/Vision*.⁸ There is risk to be taken on both sides and the pastoral leader is uniquely placed to inspire persons to risk hearing each other's story and entering each other's pain. Non-directive methods are generally clear in their expectations regarding an inherent personal cost to those seeking care. The corresponding cost for the leader in the corporate exercise of pastoral care needs to be emphasised here.

The February 16 extract above provides a window into the territorial war that ensued as persons from different communities converged on the surviving ones (*crisis and commotion*). In this conflict people sought to maintain boundaries as means of being in control of their lives. The statement of 'human error' can be taken as an admission that this attitude was less than ideal. However, this admission of guilt is not an acquittal on behalf of the relocated. As understood, the failure by one party would, in all likelihood, be committed by the Other if faced with the same choices: 'That woulda come out if we had go on the other side as well'.

The Exercise of Power

The need to relinquish control often exposes a theological problem - human failure to use power as God demonstrates. It is not that people are required to yield control of their situation to others, but rather that the power controlling any given situation be shared effectively among those affected. God chooses to share divine power and help humans participate in creative and restorative work in their varied situations. As persons come to grasp this truth, they are better placed to move across the boundaries constructed in the futile effort to preserve for themselves the exercise of power.

The real problem is for the churches which, as institutions, have not taught this lesson by example since it threatens their hierarchical leadership styles (*history hooks*). The way in which churches have exercised institutional power, often concentrated in clerical circles, is a travesty of Christian faith claims about an all-powerful God who identifies with humans. It also denies the corporate and inclusive nature of ministry and frustrates its charismatic functions.

⁸ Pembroke, N., 2002, *The Art of Listening: Dialogue, Shame and Pastoral Care*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, p.3-5

Foskett, J., 1999, "The Challenge and Promise of Pastoral Counselling", p. 135 in, Lynch, G., Ed., *Clinical Counselling in Pastoral Settings*, London: Routledge, p.124-41

A *shared praxis* approach to ministry forces clergy persons to emphasise the corporate dimension of ministry and to take seriously their need to be with their congregations in encounters that encourage persons to re-think old attitudes towards the exercise of power. Ministers, through appropriate exercise of their own power as educators, can help persons learn to share power as God does. 'The whole life of a Christian community functions as its curriculum'.⁹ Clergy leaders can, therefore, promote a new orientation to the exercise of power through sponsoring encounters that promote people's active engagement and interaction in a widening range of contexts.¹⁰ This means that the leaders will have to "let go" of their power over people which is exercised in ways that contradict the divine pattern.

Leadership in the same areas where traditional practices have served to undermine the corporateness of ministry provides the ordained leader with opportunities to subvert their influence. In Chapter Three, four contributing factors to the problem were cited - the development of ministry that was increasingly clerical, sacral, hierarchical, and exclusive. In my experience, these trends can be challenged from within the purview of the ordained ministry, provided that clergy persons have the critical capacity to pursue commitment to transformation. This is no easy leadership task. It is likely to be buffeted by attacks of 'principalities and powers' from clergy and laity alike. Any attempt to examine critically an ideology that has served well its social functions of encouraging conformity and enforcing boundaries, is likely to be met with strong resistance and organised efforts to prevent change.

With courage, however, the leader can be instrumental in initiating the process. In my experience in Montserrat, the Sunday morning sermon for Mother's Day has been the avenue for stimulating awareness of society's and the church's compliance with the emotional, physical, and economic abuse and exclusion of women. Pre-baptismal counselling and the occasion of infant baptism have allowed me to question openly society's and the church's history of discrimination against families that do not conform to its suggested norm, and its conferral of preferred status on those whose interest was served by the principles of hierarchy and exclusion. The appointment and convening of committees for planning and reviewing aspects of

⁹ Groome, op. cit., p.296

¹⁰ Dykstra, C., 1999, *Growing in the Life of Faith. Education and Christian Practices*, Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, p. 73

church life and practice have been the means for listening to silenced voices, and for demonstrating clearly that pastor and director are not necessarily synonymous. For many parishioners their participation in the church's community housing, feeding or cleaning project was the opening through which they came to value themselves as participants in ministry. If ordained ministers encourage the entire church to adopt *shared Christian praxis* as a way of life, the way opens up for the redemption of ministry that is truly collaborative and tending towards true human community.

The Need for Dialogue

The SXP1 discussions above highlight people's need of help in crossing boundaries to live in harmony with their new neighbours. The challenge of difference was so disturbing it was recorded in the song *Refugee* which both lyrically and musically expresses a sense of pathos felt by many persons.¹¹

This is how one of the relocated participants in SXP3 described her feelings.

... at that time you had to deal with other people's moods. After a while people get agitated with you being around, but with the loneliness you still had other pressures because is like you have overstayed your welcome but then you couldn't do any thing else, and you had to bear with all the different attitudes that... So to be with people and still ... it wasn't easy at all. (SXP3, March 07, 2004)

Conversation revolved around the pressures of 'other people's moods and the different attitudes'.

* Now, one of the things that came out was the problems of living with other people. Generally, we'd say, the people who were hosting people had their own concerns too.

ZM: hmm hmm

* But from your point of view, why you think that somebody would be selfish? Because, OK, making you feel you overstay your welcome, is from your perspective, being selfish.

ZM: hmm hmm

...

ZR: Maybe because we're in their space... they accustomed to their own little things. Maybe they have a special space... Now somebody in there. You don't have the space anymore. I was in a house that had in about 15 of us ...

¹¹ Greenaway, R., 1998, "Refugee", in *Little Island, Live Volcano*, Baker Hill, Montserrat: Zunky Music Ltd. See App. 1.6.

ZG: Yes

ZR: ...just to keep out of people's way, I let them use their thing and when they gone I come out. It was driving me mad!

ZG: But ...we have to be reasonable. People don't want you to live with them forever. Maybe even you with your sister or your brother or your child, people want their space. You want to be able to talk freely.

ZM: Yes to move up and down, to do whatever.

ZR: In your own house, and the privacy wasn't there.

ZG: People were glad to take you in, beg you to come. But when people look back now and see look this thing going on long, they begin to get edgy. Yes, because I had people living with me for some time, and to tell you the gospel truth, it begin to get to me after a while. Some of their habits... Lots of different reasons.

...

ZR: Some of them wanted their families to come and stay with them after a while and you were taking up the space... Some time people don't know how to come out and say, they didn't want to be the one putting you out.

ZG: Yea. They don't want you to feel they don't want you, or they want to throw you out.

ZR: Yes, right.

ZG: Then they have trouble to just come out and say it.

ZR: Yes, they couldn't say it straight out...

ZM: I think initially it helped in that they offered for you to come...But after a while you see that they start to get on your nerves...and is as if there was no going back, because we knew by 96/97 that we weren't going back, you know, so I don't know if they figured that you were going to be there indefinitely and you were going to take up more along their space.

ZG: That was the biggest thing. When you see people take you in, well, people take you in if they know well, you going back next week. But it became tiring. But when they see now that town gone, "well, no; mi nuh want dem live ya forever." So people begin to get edgy cause, not that people bother you or anything. But, you have to be realistic.

ZM: ...I think when it started we were getting food packages and that seemed to have been a problem to some people in that it was as if we were singled out. Those who evacuated seemed to be getting a preference...

(SXP3, March 07, 2004)

In the discussion above, SXP3 participants help each other in crossing boundaries, suggesting that, at Movement 5, such encounters for reflection may be useful for a

renewed approach to pastoral care. Those from the south identify some of the difficulties faced by northern residents - loss of privacy, the tension between their willingness to host friends and the sudden responsibility for relocated relatives. But it takes someone who hosted others to remind them that guests also displayed undesirable behaviours. The flaws in one group's hospitality might well have been matched by the other's failure to empathise.

Threats to Personal Identity

In different group settings, participants reflected on possible reasons why ideal sharing, as they perceived it, was not readily practised among them. The excerpt below is from a discussion restricted to an examination of the Montserrat context. The contributions here are from two adult females in SXP2. The first speaker, YW, is Methodist and a facilitator for one of the new community groups. The second, YS, a Catholic, brings expertise from the field of co-operatives. The first focuses on the human need for "private space"- 'the privateness of us as individuals' and 'the private parts of ourselves that we don't share', while the second sees people's lack of readiness to share - 'cooperatives ... don't work here because people don't share' - as problematic.

YW: ... one of the other insights that I came to in processing this whole thing is that the fact that of us being a small community, and the privateness of us as individuals, although we think that we are in communion with each other and we share the things, the private parts of ourselves we don't share. And that is one of our problems, I found out, in terms of people expressing genuinely their concerns about the volcano.

YS: Let me tell you. That is very true what you've brought up, a very interesting point about us. That is why cooperatives in the sense of the word, like how you would use cooperatives in Dominica don't work here, because people don't share.

(SXP2, April 07, 2004)

Again, there seems to be an impasse between the pull of individualism (see continuation of transcript below - 'fundamentally we still have that problem of individualism') and the search for acceptance in community. The second speaker's comments regarding the lack of success of cooperatives locally is somewhat confusing when one considers the place assigned to *maroon* in local culture. It may be that Montserrat's idealization of this concept of shared labour is a nostalgic way of calling its people toward normative community involvement since in present

reality the practice is divorced from its origins in the slave marronage tradition where alternate communities were created to bond and to sustain people resisting oppression in society. It should be mentioned though, that in the wake of Hurricane Hugo that devastated the island in 1989, there was an obvious revival of the *maroon* for reconstruction efforts. The *maroon* continued afterwards but not with the same level of widespread commitment.

Notwithstanding the obvious gap between common practice and the perceived ideal (*maroon* in its early setting), the women's reflections help to explain further the significance of any perceived threat that sharing presents. This is more thoroughly understood when placed against the statement by Church Head E above about people 'still wanting to hold on to their identity'. It is not that people don't want to share, but rather that pressure to share is interpreted as intrusive and threatening to their sense of identity. In fact, people did share their space and their possessions. The majority of residents from northern areas hosted persons who had moved from the south.

It makes sense then, as the discussion continues below, that the above claim 'people don't share' is refuted by YX who confronts YS with factual evidence. Her exclamation 'except Credit Unions!' is equivalent to "you of all people should know better!" YX's position is that if cooperatives cannot work in Montserrat, then the local success of the Credit Union is obviously an anomaly. YS rebuts this, suggesting that the success results because there is no invasion of people's privacy- 'your account is your account... you don't necessarily have to give up your account ...to or for whatever'.

YW: I really want to support that, because, in fact, it has all left a void in terms of the not coming together because we're so private.

YN: Hmm hmm

YS: Because there is the notion that we as Montserratians tend to be individuals as opposed to- This is why they say that cooperatives don't work successfully here.

YX: Except Credit Unions!

YS: Except Credit Unions, because...we can understand why Credit Union works here, because, in fact, your account is your account.

YX: Right.

YS: Within the Credit Union you don't have to necessarily give up your account, you know, give it up to or for whatever. You see?

YN: Hmm Hmm

YS: So, that is why it works. But in case of everybody working towards for the common good, I think that fundamentally we still have that problem of individualism. Right.

YE: Hmm hmm

YW: And maybe, that is why, in a way, we tend to get fractured when it comes to our religion and when it comes to our spirituality. I say fractured from the point of view that, especially since the volcano, I don't know if you've observed, many people have observed... for physical reasons too, ...what I found was that people tended not to go to church, a lot of them, not to concentrate too much on their spirituality, about being our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

(SXP2, April 07, 2004)

Invasion of privacy is identified as a problem since people's love of privacy is seen as a possible hindrance to cooperative action. Where people's intensely personal affairs are not at stake ('you don't have to necessarily give up your account... to or for whatever') they are less defensive of their space and available to work towards the desired end – 'everybody working towards for the common good'.

The last two spoken comments communicate the tension expected at Movement 4 - between normative Christian action - towards the common good' and 'the problem of individualism' which is part of a culture that values individual achievement. The issue is even more complicated because some behaviours that seem to result from individualistic tendencies may have more to do with the psychological trauma persons were experiencing (*crisis and commotion*). What YS describes as 'the problem of individualism' lends support to CH-E's observation that the traumatic situation presented threats to persons' sense of identity. This struggle here is reflective of the individual and collective personal tensions felt during the volcanic situation. In the disaster, persons exhibited the symptoms of psychological trauma. Many residents tended to isolate themselves and tried to avoid conditions that would only remind them of the traumatic event. Having experienced the sudden disintegration of their internal and external worlds, they had their sense of trust disrupted.¹² Disasters tend to be triggers for isolation and depression.¹³ These behaviours are common among the traumatised and have been identified in post

¹² Janoff-Bulman, op. cit., p.63

¹³ Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Morrow, J., 1991, "A prospective study of depression and posttraumatic stress conditions after a natural disaster: the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 23, 1266

disaster situations before the condition diagnosed as post traumatic stress disorder was so named.¹⁴

YW's observations, though explainable from a psychological standpoint, show the current situation as representing a departure from the community's norms, and present opportunity for her as a participant engaged in theological reflection to consider whether the behaviours reflect their definition of what is Christian.

...we tend to get fractured when it comes to our religion...people tended...not to concentrate too much on...being our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

One tenet of Christian teaching is that humans are created in the divine image and are, therefore, inherently worthy. Yet a strong desire for personal distinctiveness has not been presented as virtuous, at least not in the official Christian sense. So, it is understandable that persons whose actions oppose the perceived ideal withdraw from the worshipping community. They can no longer practice what is preached, for 'especially since the volcano', their individual personal situation demands greater attention than accustomed Christian practice permits. Then the observation 'we tend to get fractured when it comes to our religion and when it comes to our spirituality' is by no means puzzling.

As group reflection continues the constraints of living in a very small society where blood lines intermingle, where word of mouth information spreads quickly, and where individuals are easily identifiable come into focus (*cultural connotations*). Features of Montserrat's past history like its small size, add to the social trauma in the situation.¹⁵ Group-think tends to dominate and it becomes even more difficult to maintain one's identity. Only by refraining from total sharing of their personal spaces are some able to resist being completely absorbed into the mindset of the group. As a survival mechanism, persons tend to give the impression of being open when in fact their agenda is to preserve their dignity, to maintain a sense of self.

¹⁴ Erikson, K.T., 1976, "Loss of Communitality at Buffalo Creek", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 3, p. 302-305

Titchener, J. L., Kapp, F.T., 1976, "Family and Character Change at Buffalo Creek", *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 133, 295-299

¹⁵ Farberou, N., 1985, "Mental health aspects of disaster in small communities", *American Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 5, 50-2

YS: Anything...They not sharing. It's a major problem. Their resources, their feelings, they just not sharing. It's part of our culture...whatever makes us Montserratians? Is that!

YW: I wonder if it has to do with smallness?

YS: I don't think it has anything to do with smallness, you know.

* The size?

YX: I guess you mean smallness in the sense of Montserrat being a small country where people, everybody knows everybody, but then

YS: With everybody being relations?

YW: Right. Right.

YS: Your information, because

YX: If I tell N, N's gonna tell somebody else.

YW: There is the feeling that it's best to leave some things private. We don't want to appear selfish so we give the people from the outside something they will feel good [about]... I find a lot of us, we tend to base our decisions on what others according us, and not in terms of what we really want for ourselves.

YS: It's part of the whole fishbowl thing. It is to me. You know that you're in a fishbowl.

Group agrees.

YS: And you have to be very careful that everybody looking at you, so you have to really hide, although you in the bowl.

Group agrees very strongly. (SXP2, April 07, 2004)

In small communities, local Christian attitudes can be significant stressors to an individual's sense of identity. In places like Montserrat where most people are continually reminded of the need to sacrifice, to yield personal preferences for the common good, to deny themselves because that is the Christian thing to do, while other privileged, powerful persons are excluded from that responsibility, resentment to this teaching is internalised. While persons may openly not voice their disagreement, many develop secret means of opposing the practice in their lives.

This is a problem in any culture tempted to overemphasise one's responsibility for community at the expense of the individual personality. In such situations, pastoral care has a moral responsibility to facilitate a dialogue between the individual and

community that challenges ‘the cruel and destructive powers of the instincts of the group.’¹⁶

The Socio-political Climate

In sharp contrast to the restrictive religious emphasis, there are contemporary movements seeking to erase the cultural legacy of transatlantic slavery by encouraging freedom of thought. This thrust to correct imposed ways of thinking uses as a motto words of the late Bob Marley:

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery.

None but ourselves can free our minds...

As Davison observed, this was the very song being played as protestors took to the street on August 21, 1997 to demand respect from HMG.¹⁷

In this milieu of competing religious and political allegiances, individuals try to celebrate mental emancipation without curtailing their respect for the communities to which they belong. So they adjust to the tension of living very private lives while seeming to be sharing themselves fully. ‘We don’t want to appear selfish so we give the people from the outside something they will feel good [about]’. This cultural feature may indicate widespread acceptance of a schizophrenic type of spirituality. Indeed, this is suggested by the comment ‘and maybe, that is why, in a way, we tend to get fractured when it comes to our religion and when it comes to our spirituality’. It is useful to note, though, that a number of scholarly references have been made to this aspect of adaptability. There is evidence of a high capacity for cultural and spiritual adaptation among Caribbean persons, certainly those of African origin.¹⁸ This tendency is sometimes seen in a positive light and valued as a resistance measure to support local identity claims; but it is also useful to observe undesirable

¹⁶ Berinyuu, A., “An African Therapy in Dialogue with Freudian Psychoanalysis”, *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, p.13,18

¹⁷ Davison, P., op. cit., p.281

¹⁸ Bolioli, O., 1993, “Reclaiming Identity: The Verdun Proclamation” p.49 in, Bolioli, O., Ed., *The Caribbean: culture of resistance, spirit of hope*, N.Y.: Friendship Press

Davis, K., 1990, *Emancipation Still Comin’: Explorations in Caribbean Emancipatory Theology*, Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis, p. 50, 55-60

Lartey, “African perspectives on pastoral theology”, p.6

Pulsipher, L., 1991, “Galways Plantation, Montserrat,” p.147-58

elements of such dualisms in spirituality. It may well be that people ‘give the people from the outside something they will feel good [about]’ because of their own need for love and acceptance by others.

L. Graham explains the acceptance of double standards as a consequence of lovelessness. For him ‘love is an ethical, psychological, and relational category’ that ‘builds bridges across communities.’

Love harmonizes discordant values; it allows differences to exist as sources of creative good rather than destructive negation. Love recognizes and promotes uniqueness and individuality love is freely given and received in a commitment to an unknown future...Love is the drive to overcome estrangement.¹⁹

Where the readiness to risk the love ‘in commitment to an unknown future’ is yet unexplored, ‘destructive negation’ continues. This readiness is lacking in many communities that maintain common standards. All too often, uniformity persists at the expense of many who are unprepared to oppose the power brokers in their situation. The victims of imposed standards continue in slavish obedience to societal demands out of fear of reprisal rather than in loving response to other members of the community.

Lack of Trust

Traumatized persons tend to be anxious and fearful and often lose their sense of trust in the world around them.²⁰ That includes some persons to whom they previously related without difficulty. Erosion of trust among persons in the disaster contributed to conflicts between groups as documented in the song *Keep the Faith*. In some of the interviews presented in this chapter, clergy persons and lay leaders in churches referred to their inability to cope with the group conflicts that arose. The statements of two leaders are repeated below.

These on this side of the island refused to embrace those that had to leave the danger zone. They refused to accept them; and in the church they were so divided...But you find some real valuable persons coming from the different churches but these in St. Basil, they would never accept them.

(CH-A)

¹⁹ Graham, L., op. cit., p.162

²⁰ Janoff-Bulman, op. cit., p. 63-5, 78-9,

But what I find is that they never, even up to now, they never really seem to think that it's their church. You'd be surprised to know that there are still some saying 'ah, we hoping that Cork Hill will be reopened (CL-C)

Pastoral failures at negotiating peace between opposing factions was, no doubt, crippled by the incapacity to cope with the levels of anger that surfaced during the volcanic eruptions. As pointed out before, there has been the tendency in pastoral care to view anger in an entirely negative light. In light of contemporary discourse on the place of emotive expression in pastoral care, those who sponsor efforts at reconciliation must expect a range of human emotions to be involved. In the Montserrat context, avoidance of anger resulted in a lack of concerted effort to create and sustain dialogue. As a result, pastoral practices failed to bring relief where painful alienation was experienced by an increasing number of persons and sectors.

Movement 5: Decision / Response for Lived Christian Faith

The following are recommended on the basis of the preceding movements of this reflection:

Pastoral Training for Conflict Resolution

Our theological reflections on pastoral care during the volcano crisis brought to the fore the dire need for pastoral leadership to guide persons towards respecting the dignity of difference. In disaster situations, conflicts are inevitable. They sometimes result from misplaced anger, but other causes rooted in personal differences are likely. Much needless stress is averted if in the short term, there is movement towards conflict resolution.

Meeting the challenge of difference is difficult among the traumatised; and disaster is likely to induce trauma. This is particularly so in situations such as the Montserrat volcanic disaster which was characterised by experiences of loss, undesirable shelter and home sharing conditions, and protracted uncertainty. In the tensions that resulted, there was an obvious lack of conflict resolution skills among pastoral caregivers. The crisis highlighted the need for pastoral care to take an active role in conflict resolution, as many quarrels happened in church circles, often between groups representing different congregations. These groups would be further traumatised if help for their troubles were to be offered from outside their churches. The same obtained for otherwise respectable individuals. To their

embarrassment, persons who under normal conditions maintained good relations with others found themselves involved in quarrels, and in some instances, previously law abiding citizens were incarcerated. A high incidence of conflict situations requiring pastoral intervention was noted in the disaster setting. Since building trust is fundamental to efforts at creating harmony within and between groups, pastoral practices must in some way help persons to risk trusting one another so that they can help each other on life's journey.

This calls for special training on the part of clergy and lay leaders. Caribbean Christianity has inherited a tendency to ignore broader political concerns, and, as a result, churches have failed to properly prepare their leaders through awareness of group and power dynamics. The need for leadership that facilitates helpful exercise of power will be discussed in the third reflection in this chapter.

Emphasis on Inter-cultural Communication

Respect for the Other requires persons to recognise human worth present in contexts other than their own. In the context of globalisation, pastoral practices must emphasise the place of inter-cultural communication.²¹ When disaster strikes, this need is seen more urgently. There are two reasons for this.

First, external support is a necessary feature of disaster mitigation. Recovery from a major disaster usually involves various forms of assistance from outside sources, and so, in addition to paying attention to the issue of sharing among locals, it is also important to address the matter of sharing between locals and outsiders.

²¹ Schreiter, R., 1999, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis.

The author proposes a new 'catholicity that will make a theology standing between the local and the global cohere'.

Catholicity has traditionally been understood as extension throughout the world and the fullness of faith handed down from the apostles. Now communication – including issues of culture, identity, social change – becomes the third and necessary addition to the theological concept of catholicity... This theological addendum gives the new catholicity concreteness. (p. xi)

... the concept of catholicity may be the theological concept most suited to developing a theological view of theology between the global and the local in a world church. (p. 118-9)

Secondly, outside influences are often essential for helping locals effect the necessary cultural changes. Whether or not the internal quarrels occurring in the context of the Montserrat disaster are understood as having a different origin to the political clashes between the local and British agencies, the problem of divisiveness still needs to be addressed. Practitioners of action science explain how easy it is for members of any particular culture to get stuck in assumptions that stall their ways of thinking and prevent them from perceiving alternatives. Even when information received is contrary to the assumptions and inferences that have been culturally ingrained, persons become reluctant to apply corrective feedback and prefer to accept what has already been established in their minds as fact.²² This is another reason why pastoral practices must be intentional about communicating the value of help coming from outside the crisis situation. Communities should capitalise on this before, during and after disaster, even as they follow an agenda which places them in command of their own situation.

An Interdisciplinary Approach

When one takes the entire discussion about personal differences and the possible discord that may arise from these, coupled with perspectives on individualistic versus communalistic tendencies, it seems desirable to harmonise two strands of reflection. The first explores the phenomenon in terms of psychological and sociological concerns. The human processes of individuation and the development of individual personal and group identity are regarded as the domain of psychology and sociology. The second angle is a politico-religious one.

What if pastoral caregivers chose a truly holistic approach and looked at the whole issue of difference from the viewpoint of a merger between these different ways of seeing? This is what the search for a new theological anthropology requires- a look at human nature that embraces all its dimensions. Theologically, this points to *shalom*, wholeness. Traditionally, a discipline examines a particular human problem from one angle. This approach is understandable since every human engaged in problem solving does so from within a specific context. But when one considers that knowledge, while experienced individually, is really both the function and property of community, it makes all the more sense that the exploration of and for knowledge

²² Farber-Robertson, A., 2000, *Learning While Leading: Increasing Your Effectiveness in Ministry*, The Alban Institute, p. xi

proceed as a collaborative enterprise. Where it does, the idea of merging perspectives on knowledge - psychology, sociology and theology - is much easier to grasp.

2. The prophetic role in pastoral care

One unfortunate consequence of pastoral care's failure to give people guidance in reconciling differences, be they of localised cultural or broader social and political dimensions, is its bewildering incapacity to inspire prophetic action among those concerned. Where troublesome interpersonal interactions remain unresolved it is extremely difficult for parties to work together at resolving structural problems highlighted through their disagreement. Exploration of alternative possibilities for both those offending and offended requires first that injustice be challenged. Usually, this calls for confrontation of the oppressive person(s). Both oppressor and oppressed derive benefit when unjust structures and relationships are brought in line with God's harmonious purpose. Yet, too often has it been said that pastoral care overlooks this moral responsibility. Rather than foster truth telling which leads to transformative action, pastoral practices have tended to reinforce the status quo.

The research groups engaged in *shared Christian praxis* reviewed situations which clearly illustrated the failure of pastoral practices to challenge injustice and to name the evil done by parties in the context of the Montserrat disaster situation. As is often the case elsewhere, women and children were the ones victimised and left to fend for themselves. The eviction of Grace and her children from a church shelter (documented in Chapter Four) was not unusual. In the transcript that follows, we meet a woman ZR who was denied access to relief supplies and a place in a public shelter because she was not present on the island when the eruptions started. She had travelled off-island to attend a family wedding.

ZR: I was suffering because I wasn't here when the actual evacuation of town happened. When I came back I got a place to shack up with everybody else in the north. And I was told that I would not qualify [for food rations]. Now I'm not working and I have a young child...

* You didn't qualify because you happened not to be here?

ZR: All my belongings are in Trials...I can't go to Trials to live. And I'm told I do not qualify. So then this very same thing, to see every body getting, you have to go without.

ZG: What they had to do, you have to use your discretion. Even if they have a set pattern that don't mean you can't use your senses. Somebody with a young child, you'll tell them they don't qualify for food!

ZR: It was tough because the child's father too had mortgage and everything to pay in houses over there that they not even living in, and every month you still have to contribute to this house that you're staying in, the bills, and you still have to go and buy the same food in the house that everybody else collecting too. Well sometimes my spirit fall very low. Some of them who get ...Sometimes they share, but not every time they would share. You end up going and buy the same things that they were giving out. But...after we had to evacuate again, the very same people put on the radio for us to come again... I say I not going back there. I say I not going back no matter what! If I even have to sleep on the ground. And at night, I went from church, from school, from shelter to shelter. I couldn't find any place, up and down with my young child. When they had big stones, the eruption with stones in the night.

ZG: That night there, 17th September?

ZR: I went to the shelter...my sister gave me her cot and slept with her grandmother...my baby and I slept on the cot. The next morning I didn't even get to open my eyes good, the shelter manager they tell me no space in the shelter. So now I have to go walk all the next day with a young child.

ZA: Ah!

DR: Trying to find-

ZA: Well, you really love Montserrat!

ZR: I walked all afternoon. And I could have gone to England. The thing is I gave away everything I had when I was in Salem, everything I had, because I was to go. But because of the experience with living with somebody that I did not know, I didn't want to go to England. Because these people I would be living with were people I did not know either, and I was afraid to go. (SXP3, March 14, 2004)

ZR's case was not unusual. In several instances less needy persons gained access to food and other securities at the expense of the more vulnerable. During the earlier phases of the eruptions, 1995 to 1997, the official position was that all relocated and elderly persons were to be provided for. But many persons abused their place of privilege and siphoned off benefits that could have better allocated to those in greater need. The song *Me Package* includes a protest regarding the allocation of funds for travel abroad. This encouraged dishonesty as persons who having lived abroad for extended periods, did not qualify for but still accessed travel funds. The rationale given by self-seeking parties is: 'Jenny and all gone, I can't see why shouldn't I'.²³

²³ See App. 1.3.

In *Pay Off*, the singer regrets that the powerful and wealthy constantly oppress and abuse the vulnerable.²⁴

Movement 1: Naming / Expressing Present Praxis

Injustice: Allocation of relief supplies

The guidelines for distribution of relief food supplies stipulated that these be given to the elderly and to residents who were forced to relocate on account of the disaster (*political praxis*). Here is a young mother who happened to be away from the island on vacation at the start of the eruptions. Disaster relief personnel deny her access to free food since they officially categorise her as having relocated for other reasons. The third speaker sees this as appalling, a shocking lack of good judgement on the part of those involved in making the decision. Those invested with power to help others have used regulations to sanction their unjust actions.

Several persons complained that they were denied their quota of relief supplies and there were reports that unallocated food materials had to be disposed of after the expiry date on their labels. While there was no stated policy that denied poor persons access to the available resources, many vulnerable persons experienced indignity as they sought financial assistance for food and medical supplies. Some went with too little rather than be exposed to the harshness of disaster management personnel.

Injustice: Eviction of shelterees

The statement of the victimised woman - ‘...sometimes my spirit fall very low’ - is understandable. There is a further expression of regret - ‘ah!’, that the same mother had an ordeal finding accommodation for herself and her infant. To make matters worse, early the next day, she was threatened with eviction by the shelter manager.

To get a glimpse into the gravity of the trauma experienced by the young family, one would need to have some idea what happened on September 17, 1996. On that night, there was the first explosive eruption of the Soufrière Hills Volcano. The fearful horror of the experience has been described by children and adults in poetry, prose and song.²⁵ The song *This Is It* records the fear and panic that characterised the

²⁴ See App. 1.7.

²⁵ For a selection of children’s recollections see Edwards, E., ed., 1998, *The Voices of Our Children. Soufrière Hills Volcano, St. Augustine School, Montserrat*; for song, Greenaway, R., 1998, “This Is

response of Montserrat's residents (*crisis and commotion*).²⁶ The explosions of September 17, 1996 and the ensuing trauma constitute one of the events reflected on in the transcript presented in Appendix 3A. In spite of the painful experience, a young woman and her child are denied very basic human entitlements. ZG's question: 'That night there, 17th of September?' is a rhetorical one. It is simply unbelievable that in the wake of the most traumatic experience up to that point, anyone would have evicted a mother and baby. No doubt, the shelter manager like everyone else would have been traumatised; but the action is judged irresponsible.

Movement 2: Critical Reflection on Present Action

The fact that an authority figure - the shelter manager whose role is essentially a caring one - would cite overcrowding as a justifiable basis for excluding the young mother at such a critical time is proof that a change in culture is needed. The reference to 'a set pattern' is a critique of the oppressor's habit of resorting to 'the rule book' as an excuse for unjust action (*political praxis*). It is pretty much like the congregation in *Mixed-up life in a shelter* which used Methodist sanctions against alcohol as the basis for demanding the eviction of shelterees. 'That don't mean you can't use your senses' is the speaker's attempt to erase the probable "excuse". The problem indicates that there are culturally embedded hindrances to caring, and these must be countered (*cultural connotations*).

Other incidences of persons being evicted from shelters were mostly on the grounds of their antisocial behaviour. It is useful to recognise, though, that because churches served as shelters in the disaster context, behaviours were classified as undesirable simply because they would not have been allowed in these places under normal conditions (*social situation*). In all cases, shelter rules were designed for maintenance of good order and no provision was made for lapses, even though one could expect misjudgement from traumatised persons continuing to experience escalating stresses such as faced by those who had to cope with the volcano erupting in their midst.

Regarding evictions from shelters, focus group members also reflected on two problem situations recorded in the preceding chapter- *Mixed up life in a shelter*

It", in *Little Island, Live Volcano*; for poetry, Meade, J., 1999, "September Seventeen" in Waters, J., ed., *The Caribbean Writer: Volume 13*, p.49

²⁶ See App. 1.9.

involving alcoholics and *No room in our church* documenting Grace's exclusion from a sanctuary.

* Well she was living in the church so they surmised that is in the church that she got pregnant.

YB: So they saying she did the act in the church?

YF: That's going to be a blessed baby.

YB: That's what they saying? That she carried out the act inside their church?

*That was their point, that...she did it in church, and...she was going to bring this baby out of marriage in their church and they wanted her out...

The presenting problem is that persons are guilty of having engaged in sexual intercourse in the church, and Grace is singled out because a congregation suspects that she is an offender. Hence the question 'So they saying she did the act in the church?' It is important to note that there was no stated concern regarding her partner. This shows the sexism inherent in the stand taken by the accusers (*cultural connotations / political praxis*). As pointed out in Chapter Four, and as seen in the case of another mother (ZR) and her baby being evicted from a shelter, the decision makers often justify their position on the basis that their actions are taken in compliance with rules. Helpful theological thinking that would lead to appropriate political praxis is wanting.

Movement 3: Accessing Christian Story/Vision

This movement is detectable as the conversation continues.

YL: But that was the time she needed support.

YB: That's what they should have been thinking about

YF: That kind of mentality remind me of the time when Jesus Christ was walking with his disciples and he stopped...to pick a corn, and these people...Pharisees and Saducees condemned them for that. Following this strict dogma and not taking into account realities of life...where you have to obey these rules, the set thing. You haffi obey dem strictly to the letter, and when you faced with a difficult situation you just have to keep remembering rules. You going throw out people in the church...What about the love that's in your heart?

FL: Exactly.

YF's judgement concerning slavish obedience to rules is informed by biblical traditions where Jesus demands more than a Pharisaic righteousness, one that uphold the spirit rather than the letter of the law (*theological thinking – bible bases*). Jesus'

attitude to the law takes note of real life conditions such as the trauma of dislocation: 'But when you face the reality of it, that you have refugees in there'. For the traumatised, the failure to practice church discipline which sanctions procreation only within the context of marriage should not be the main issue (*theological thinking – personal positions*). The question: 'what about the love that's in your heart?' points to the issue which ought to be at the heart of decision making. It is God's love at work in the human heart.

An inflexible pattern of rule keeping is also critiqued in the discussion recorded below. But here, a more sensitive matter is raised. Disobedience (here again the subject is sexual activity) occurring near the altar 'which is the most holy part of the church' constitutes disregard for a holy God. In their search for an acceptable moral and ethical response to the demands of the situation, research participants continue to explore the concern at hand.

YF: I was about to...to ask the question to the people here. How about if a pastor were to...shield off the altar, which is the most holy part of the church, seal it off so that nobody sleep there and nobody lives there, nobody even goes in there. The rest of the church is there for the refugees. Would that be more acceptable to you, or is the rest of the church just as holy and sacrosanct as the altar?

YB: It is. It is.

YL: All of it.

YI: The whole property.

YF: But when you face the reality of it, that you have refugees in there, and they drinking and sexing, will you treat them both the same?

* I think in the case where they called me to the church, what incensed then was that the bottle was

YB: was on the altar?

* Not the altar, on the pulpit...and that incensed them. I remember...the lady was...apologetic. Well you were saying not the hard drinkers, but these were alcoholics really... I came with a resolution. I told them if you have to drink, do it out of Methodist property because we have a problem here in that they [Methodists] don't allow, and they're not even permitted to take alcohol on to Methodist property.

The speakers struggle to find a middle ground for action that satisfies the call to holy living. Their decision must simultaneously reflect the holy God who demands respect and whose call to holiness is actualised through serving human need. This was the challenge constantly repeated in the prophetic traditions of the Bible. Prophets

reminded their hearers that love of God and love of neighbour were inseparable. They were explicit in condemning all attempts to justify abuse on religious grounds. Those who prioritised institutional requirements such as fasts and tithes over human need failed in the service of God.

YF: But how about a building such as this? Is this just as sacrosanct, as holy as the church, the chapel?

YB: Yes

* Well it's not dedicated for worship but because it is a Methodist building, the whole use of alcohol-

YF: So you see sex and alcohol in this building the same as you would see it in the chapel?

* I didn't tell you how I see it nuh.

YF: Well I'm asking you

YL: The apartments down there are apartments for people to live but the rules say, no alcohol, no cohabitating unless you're married, no loud music. We tell them up front! We actually write it in the lease.

(SXP2, March 10, 2004)

Failure to accept the church's prohibitions against the use of alcohol is the second offending behaviour discussed. In both instances (sexual activity and alcohol consumption), the group considered what would constitute an appropriate Christian response to the problem presented. 'Is this [Christian Education Centre] just as sacrosanct, as holy as the church, the chapel?' The building was 'not dedicated for worship' (*theological thinking – church connections*). The ritual of dedication of places for worship is a significant element in *Christian Story/ Vision*. The view entertained here is that since the Christian Education Centre was not dedicated, it could be viewed as a "less holy" place, freeing the congregation from the perceived need for strict observance of the rules of the institutional church.

The discussion continues.

YF: But in a case where

YI: As a church property we cannot afford to have

YL: You see we believe certain things. (SXP2, March 10, 2004)

By asking me to give a judgement as to whether 'sex and alcohol in this building [is] the same as ... in the chapel', YF invites me, a Christian minister supposedly knowledgeable about biblical and Methodist traditions, to serve as a resource person and teacher. He is the only participant challenging the group position and forcing a

broader look at the problem. But YL immediately presents the church's position without making any allowance for 'the reality of it' as YF has requested. The position is supported by YI indicating some awareness on the part of participants that they have a role to play in the church's decision making and caring processes.

Even where church members recognise that they have been vested with authority, many demonstrate no strong awareness of the call to prophetic action. In excluding some who need shelter, they are careless with respect to the responsible exercise of the authority assigned them. Their focus is not on their caring role but rather on their use of the available power to exclude. This attitude should not surprise us as it fits in with the church's tendency to exclusion. It, however, contradicts the imperative to love.

Movement 4: Dialectical Hermeneutic to Appropriate Christian Story/ Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions

Having reviewed the traditional church position on pre-marital sex, the group's awareness of human need for emotional, moral and spiritual support is brought to bear on its theological reflection. In the case of Grace that need was clearly stated.

YL: But that was the time she needed support.

YB: That's what they should have been thinking about.

The group reflecting, like Grace's congregation, felt correct that ethical action required more value to be placed on her family's need for somewhere to live than on taking disciplinary measures against her.

Another important point for consideration is the longevity of the shelter situation (*hindsight helps*). Grace had lived in her shelter for several months before she became pregnant. It is this reality that forces the next question.

YF: I accept that. But in a case of a disaster where you have refugees needing a place to live, would you see it the same?

YB: Yes

YI: Is the same yes. Is just that we, you wouldn't have...how to put it? The persons that would be there, some of them wouldn't be as easy to deal with as others.

YF: I don't know. I seem to be disagreeing with you guys. I disagree in a case of a disaster where people looking a place to live and you facing a crisis and people want to have sex, in that situation sex in here different to sex in the chapel. And getting into the chapel, I see sex in the altar area different to sex in the back benches.

YB laughs

YI: OK

YF: Because up there suppose to be most holy. I know is all around but that is the most holy part of the church and if any place is, is sacred it has to be up there.

YL: I agree. I agree with that.

YF: I understand what we saying about Methodists and alcohol, you know. Normally. But when you are facing abnormal situations, disaster you have to give and take. And I would be more willing to give and take in a building such as this than out there.

YI: Hmm hmm. Than out there.

YF: And if all I have is out there, I'd be more willing to give and take in the back pews.

*So, you're willing to make a compromise, if you can say that

YF: Yes

YL: I would say limit it to alcohol.

(SXP2, March 10, 2004)

It is interesting that the compromise offered is restricted to drinking alcohol. Many Christians, including some regular consumers of alcohol, present institutional prohibition as the indisputable biblical position. Others are well aware of specific reasons (such as combating alcoholism) why their church, for example the MCCA, continues to sponsor teachings that defend total abstinence from alcohol. However, the majority of church going persons, including large numbers of Methodists are 'social drinkers'; but most alcoholics absent themselves from churches because they are unlikely to find the required support there. This is because of the tendency to view alcohol drinking as sinful, and to present alcoholism simply as a bad habit rather than as a disease. Also, in the disaster situation, congregations seemed totally oblivious to the fact that increased alcohol consumption is frequently noted among the traumatised.²⁷

In considering the biblical mandate to love, participants point to the need to observe the spirit rather than the letter of the law. Taking human need seriously might involve compromise with regard to the observance of rules.

²⁷ Stewart, S, 1996, "Alcohol abuse in individuals exposed to trauma: a critical review", *Psychological Bulletin*, 120, 83-5, 110.

Movement 5: Decision / Response for Lived Christian Faith

Critique of Local Culture in the Light of Accepted Christian Teaching

There are two points to note here. The first focuses on what clergy and laity must do to fulfil their prophetic role. The second is a caution about what pastoral leaders must refrain from doing.

First, the mandate to address injustice is clear. 'In a case of a disaster where you have refugees needing a place to live' their basic human need must be met. Rules and regulations should not provide justification for human abuse. Congregations must be educated and encouraged to live out Christ's mandate to provide care on the basis of people's need. Where structures frustrate caring for people, Christians must do all they can to transform the situation, using their congregational life as a starting point.

Secondly, pastoral care must be sensitive to the cultural context for service and not reinforce unhelpful local cultural attitudes. But while every local situation presents its expectations of pastoral caregivers, clergy persons in particular, one sometimes does a disservice to people by being a minister who fulfils their every expectation. While SXP2 might have expected the ordained leader to provide the answer, it is obvious that they were sufficiently informed to discuss the issue at hand. Usually there is already sufficient wisdom in the context to address troubling questions. Pastors would do good to recognise this in their efforts to sponsor the priesthood of all believers.

In a previous SXP2 discussion surrounding a teenage pregnancy, an officer of the Methodist Church, defends her institution's position as she does in the discussion where both alcohol consumption and sexual activity in the church were considered. She is however influenced in the group setting to adjust her perspective to allow the consumption of alcohol in the chapel. The group will not, however, sanction sexual activity in the same way, even though one member is willing to make a compromise.

But when you are facing abnormal situations, disaster you have to give and take...

Traditional pietism influences people's attitudes towards sexual activity and issues of embodiment. As mentioned before, there have been notions regarding physical expression that strongly suggest physical sexual activity as inherently sinful. This is why sexual activity is not entertained in the 'holiest part of the church' even though refugees, including married couples, occupied churches for two or more years.

But in a case of a disaster where you have refugees needing a place to live, would you see it the same?

I disagree in a case of a disaster where people looking a place to live and you facing a crisis and people want to have sex...

The objector's contention here is based on a consideration of what already obtains – 'the reality of it'.

But when you face the reality of it...will you treat them both the same?

Revelation of the participants' sexual awareness suggests that they already know what is culturally acceptable - (*cultural connotations*).

YF: What about the days when we used to have sex in sweet grass? Why they can't do that? Why they have to go pan God altar?

YL: A little children go ina sweet grass! Well, mi nah say dat! I take that back.

YF: You know how much people used to have sex down a golf course down there?

* What happen you used to go round go watch them?

YF: When I used to work down there I used to see in the morning condoms all over the place, out pon de green dem.

(SXP2, March 10, 2004)

Notwithstanding their full awareness of current reality, participants are unwilling to have Christian teaching capitulate to what obtains in the local culture. The reality is that persons, including children, are sexually active. But this does not correspond to a Christian ideal. The statement 'you see we believe certain things' can be taken as the public and authoritative group position, since the group concurs. Even in unusual and demanding circumstances, faithfulness to traditional Christian teaching is prescribed. While there has been a review of the initial judgement regarding the consumption of alcohol, the group position on disallowing sexual activity in the sanctuary does not change even after much discussion and reflection even though one member has altered his judgement during the course of the meeting.

3. The Provision of Care for Pastors

Although several research participants were critical of church bureaucratic processes, there was no outright condemnation of the church in its denominational forms. Generally, research participants expressed a high regard for the church as an institution and wanted no decline in its acceptance, socially or politically. They tended, however, to assess the church's operation in terms of clergy practice rather

than on the basis of total life of believers. There were frequent expressions of dissatisfaction with clergy performance. Participants' statements, which are truly indicative of the feelings of many residents who remained on the island, reflect pre-understandings concerning the role of clergy persons.

Following is a transcript of an SXP3 conversation where focus group members reflect on a concern which was discussed by persons throughout Montserrat. It was the disturbing issue of the departure of several ministers during the volcanic eruptions. The discussion gives some insight into the situation of persons feeling abandoned by their pastors.

ZG: There was a thing that I sometimes have to laugh. They bringing in some people from United Nations to deal with psychology and stress management. Where were they when the people were really stressed out? Come to talk about stress management now. We done deal with the situation! We needed them that time. At that time you'll be glad if somebody could come and talk to you, say something, even a minister, like yourself. But nobody! Minister a look fu demself too!

* Do you think the ministers left a lot to be desired?

ZG: Oh yes! Very much! Because only the home grown ministers from all the churches as far as I see...like yourself for example, stayed.

ZR: The others are gone.

ZG: Ours, they go and come. Dey nuh stay permanently. If there's like anything that the local preachers can't deal with they'll come in from Antigua...Because their family - Well, our minister, his family in Antigua were threatening the Conference that if they don't move out their son, that they going to courts! You know what I mean? Because they felt that the guy would lose his life here! That was the time when the people get burn up in the volcano, and 3 of them were Adventist. So, you know? So, his family was threatening the conference if he don't get out right now. They felt that he would die here. Because you know the old talk in Antigua: 'What Montserrat people a do down there? They so stubborn and thing.' You don't really blame them. So after we thought about that we tell him 'Pastor, go head, go head' because whether you're minister or not you have to be realistic. You have to think about your family and conference also. So some ministers themselves have their own personal safety to think about. For some of them, although they say that they called, you wonder if some of them really get called or they just went...Because when the time of trouble come they run!

Note well that such accusatory remarks as 'But nobody [to talk to]. Minister a look fu demself too!' and 'some of them, although they say that they called, you wonder if some of them really get called...when the time of trouble come they run!' are

balanced with statements of concern for ministers' well-being. 'You have to think about your family and conference also'.

Further discussion on the matter reveals that the departure of their pastors did exacerbate the faith crises that many experienced. 'In the height of the crisis you kind of blamed them - Whey de ministers? Nobody here to pray with nobody! No pastor, everybody gone! and so on'.

*Well we did have something like that in the Methodist Church. This minister's mother had led protests before he came.

ZM: We had heard before about his wife not wanting to come.

* Yes, there were difficulties before and they blamed the church for that. They said the anticipation of going to Montserrat had caused stress. But while he was on his way here, there were these protests. But I think if the church [in Montserrat] had known, they might have asked for him not to come. Because knowing how the people had been understanding when it was obvious that he was afraid, there were leaders who felt it wasn't good for either party for us to have somebody here who is so afraid of the volcano.

ZG: Yea. It happened so that in the height of the crisis you kind of blamed them - Whey de ministers? Nobody here to pray with nobody! No pastor, everybody gone! and so on. But then, in hindsight you have to see ministers are human beings too, and their wife, or their children, or their mother, they have serious concerns. And they just can't ignore.

In spite of the sense of abandonment felt by some persons, in the group setting they invited one another to be sympathetic towards the ordained ministers who needed to be understood as human beings with their own needs and concerns. But their efforts to understand and to accept their Christian leaders' decisions to leave are challenged by prior expectations of pastoral care. Pastors were expected to be faithful in the most difficult circumstances. Their departure was interpreted as unfaithfulness.

* A lot of people refer to this. It comes up in almost every group I meet, every situation. A number of persons said they don't think the ministers were being faithful; like they didn't have enough faith. That's not your view?

ZG: Oh yea. To me, you know some of them didn't have enough faith because, well, their faith got tested. They keep telling the congregation to have faith and so on, but when the crunch come, they didn't have any at all! I was reading something from one of my own church journals...Back in Romans, remember the genocide wars, and some of the people had to take refuge in neighbouring countries...the ministers go wid dem. Dey nuh go an lef dem flock! With all of that killing and so on, the ministers go with them. That was remarkable. They didn't abandon their flock at all. If was Montserrat, the volcano

erupt up the top the mountain there, you could run to the north. Dem fellas dere, a serious problem dem gat. And they didn't abandon the congregations and that was very remarkable. That was how you know they were truly called and not just go...

ZM: When you look at the other side. With us when it started, our locals, hardly any left. It was the outsiders. They had some place else to go, and families abroad.

ZG: The Montserratians stayed.

* That is for the churches like ours that had a lot more pastors from outside. But if you look like at the Pentecostal churches, they all had local ministers. And they lost most of their pastors.

ZM: Yes, yes.

ZG: Yes, we noticed that. So all up and down

ZA: In all the churches

ZR: With me [I] actually went to church in Antigua because I had to go in the night, so I went to church in Antigua

* But for the day to day

ZR: It didn't bother me much because I read. I read a lot. I read my bible all the time, so I never really looked at the pastors for them to ask me were you ... I never looked at it that way. I never looked at the pastors.

ZA: Well maybe you never looked to them but you seek out their help. It should be their rule that in a time of crisis they look for the people.

ZG: You know, you all shattered and everything you would say that the last person that would leave...would be the ministers. Because dem a people who got contact wid God!

Participants' attempts to defend the institutional church in areas of perceived failure often amounted to a defence of ordained ministers and gave an indication of the relative status conferred on clergy as opposed to laity – 'dem a people who got contact wid God!' There are clear perceptions of clergy as spiritually superior persons. Their status is linked to high expectations the ordained face from their congregations. 'It should be their rule that in a time of crisis they look for the people' In the exercise of care and concern for people, higher demands are placed on pastors than on laypersons. In the setting which called for entire congregations to care, teachings about the priesthood of all believers and the corporate exercise of ministry remained an academic matter.

Rarely, as in the exchange below, did group members call each other to live as priests.

ZR: All of us do. All of us do [get in contact with God].

ZG: Yes, we know all of us do but the ministers

ZR: All of us do. I suppose the volcano show us that we ourselves are ministers. I think we should stop looking to the ministers for anything. We have the same powers as the ministers.

ZA: No, no, no. Let me tell you

ZR: Yes we do. Every one of us are ministers. You have to open your heart to God.

Those who fulfilled persons' expectations by providing a pastoral presence were highly commended and referred to as exemplars.

ZG: The ministers have a very high calling. They're ordained and set apart for that particular focus; and they claim that they're called by God themselves...So at a time of crisis, they really prove...that they're called by God themselves...

ZG: The ministers, most of them, let down their congregations at a time of crisis, when the people really need them most.

ZM: Fr. P. was different.

ZG: Yes, I agree with that.

ZM: He stayed and his family, I understand, was calling him.

ZG: Yes. They were upset.

ZM: Yes, but he stayed. And the Catholic, Fr. L, he stayed.

ZG: That same man there, I will never forget him.

ZM: Fr. P?

ZG: Yes, he came and visit us at the Adventist shelter. You know what I mean? And he was an Anglican priest.

(SXP3, March 21, 2004)

In this case, a valued pastoral presence came from the Anglican priest who was there for persons at the SDA shelter.

Movement1: Naming /Expressing Present Praxis

As is true for the rest of the population, the majority of Christian pastors left the island (*crisis and commotion*). The two sets of departures were viewed differently since the community held different expectations for pastors as opposed to lay Christians (*cultural connotations*). With regard to the former, the prevailing understanding was 'it should be their rule that in a time of crisis they look for the people and the last person that would leave ... would be the ministers' (*theological thinking – church connections*). Pastors were expected to be givers only rather than recipients of care.

The departure of pastors was a sore point for many. The point was made clear as I led the very first meeting of SXP2. As I tried to outline the method for reflection, one participant's response was straight to the point.

* So this approach to continual reviewing makes us think praxis rather than practice. We are here. How did we behave? How do people behave when they are afraid? What are people's needs when they are afraid? So it's a discussion about the now.

Group: Hmm hmm.

* What are their beliefs and values regarding such practices? I distinctly remember some people used to say anybody who was afraid it was because they had no faith.

YN: But then all the preachers left here! Left us to ourselves. (*long laugh*) Nobody, nobody. (*laughter continues*)

* Sorry, when I said that I really wasn't talking about my own position.

YN: No, no. I know that. (SXP2, February 18, 2004)

This was one issue where persons were prepared to mete blame on pastors of other communions. For example, a civic leader below, a Catholic, offers his judgement on Anglican matters.

CoL-1: Mark you, I think overall the churches did pretty well. I think some ministers of religion showed lack of faith - those who ran away.

* Like their personal fears?

CoL-1: Yes, personal fears. I think if you believed in God and God will protect me, not despair and I think it was a crying shame that we couldn't fill the Anglican position for so long.²⁸

* But you are aware that there are still other reasons, and some of them might have more?

CoL-1: Point. There are always other reasons. But I think they should have shown us a bit more faith in God. I mean, I think.

(Interview, March 03, 2004)

The harshest judgement was usually given by members of a minister's own communion, especially those of the congregation(s) involved.

CL-C We have had some bad experiences of people not wanting to come, people coming and turning back because they're afraid that they are committed to their families and so on. Coming out of that, we'll always remember the experience of the two...²⁹ They really

²⁸ After "Fr. P's" departure, there was no Anglican priest on island.

²⁹ Reference to two retired British ministers

came and became part of, and those two will always remain as being positive and helpful. Then you have people who come and have their own programme and not really pastoring. And you can't understand how somebody could come as a shepherd and be oblivious of the flock (*chuckle*), oblivious of the need of the flock. The only thing you could do is refer right back to, is it Isaiah?

* Ezekiel?

CL-C: Ezekiel. There's a passage there dealing with the shepherd. You can't help referring back to this because that's the experience we have right in this modern day when people come and they forget about the flock. And then God had to say to Ezekiel that he is the shepherd and he'll look after the flock. But we have had those type of experiences. But still, out of every ill, some good comes. And the good that has come is that you realise you just have to put your confidence in God and depend on God because that's the only true shepherd. And you have to just be sympathetic too, and pray for the fearful shepherd and the faithless shepherd (*laugh*).

(Interview CL-C, April 01, 2004)

The community had appointed itself judge of pastors who, according to its understanding, had abandoned their charge. The statement 'The ministers, most of them, let down their congregations at a time of crisis, when the people really need them most' can be taken as the community verdict.

The research participants' expectations of pastoral care underlie their critiques of pastors who 'let down their congregations at a time of crisis'. For many the onset of volcanic eruptions had provoked a crisis of faith and they expected their pastors to provide theological explanations for the phenomena they were witnessing and general guidance in faith matters. They expected a supportive pastoral presence in the midst of difficulty and needed caregivers who could be trusted with their private concerns such as their fears.

Movement 2: Critical Reflection on Present Action

As for the two ministers cited in the group discussion (SXP3), many pastors who evacuated Montserrat faced family crises. This has been substantiated earlier in the study. Indications were also given in interviews, one of which is cited below.

After the crisis...it was no longer easy for overseas pastors when they were getting all their family saying when they hear all the thing what is this that you're staying in Montserrat. So all the pressure. And I know one pastor in particular, he had a young family...So the need came. Well, it was advisable for the pastor to really go back overseas.

(Interview CH-B, February 19, 2004)

One problem is that among many ministers and parishioners who share an understanding of ministry as vocation, an unwritten code of practice ignores the personal needs of ministers. Notwithstanding Protestant statements about the role of clergy as a representative one, notions of only slightly-less-than-divine ministers persist. Church people continue to expect that their pastors have a more immediate connection with God and receive well above average doses of whatever fortifies one to endure suffering. As one speaker puts it, 'dem a people who got contact wid God'. However, when there is, in its judgement, an indication of pastoral faithfulness, the group tries to lay claim to this as evidence as local virtue.

... only the home grown ministers from all the churches as far as I see, only the home grown ministers ... stayed.

...with us when it started, our locals, hardly any left. It was the outsiders.

It was my responsibility to intervene and to remind the group that a significant number, possibly a larger one, of locals had also migrated overseas. But the group itself admitted this and recognised that the turn of events may not have been the direct result of pastoral faithfulness but possibly dependent on other factors such whether or not ministers had someplace else to move to.

When you look at the other side, with us when it started, our locals, hardly any left. It was the outsiders. They had some place else to go, and families abroad.

Movement 3: Accessing Christian Story/ Vision

The expectations that people had of their pastors should not be seen as far fetched. In fact, this is quite in keeping with traditional Christian teachings about the role of the minister. The historical images of the minister as pastor and shepherd have focused on the caring and nurturing aspects of ministry. We have seen the example of a lay pastoral leader using this biblical image as a standard for judging pastoral performance.

Then you have people who come and...not really pastoring...a shepherd...oblivious of the need of the flock...

Ezekiel. There's a passage there dealing with the shepherd...that's the experience we have right in this modern day when people come and they forget about the flock...And you have to just be sympathetic too, and pray for the fearful shepherd and the faithless shepherd.

(CL-C, April 01, 2004)

It is the same benchmark used in the SXP3 discussion for determining that pastors were worthy of their calling as such. ‘Dey nuh go an lef dem flock ... They didn’t abandon their flock at all’.

As Messer observes, ‘a sense of self-giving *agape* love permeates the pastor metaphor.’³⁰ This characteristic is captured in the pastoral image of the shepherd who engages in self-risking defence of the sheep. The image then, engenders the high expectations that parishioners hold. It seems to me that, in its presentation of the pastoral image of shepherd, the Christian church has encouraged both unreasonable expectations and excessive clericalism in pastoral care. The ordained minister is seen as shepherd, perceived to have a superior spirituality and a higher capacity to meet the needs of the ones perceived to be weaker, usually the laity. In keeping with a particular biblical interpretation, the classical tradition of pastoral care places high priority on the pastor’s expression of compassion and sensitivity to human need, evidenced by a willingness to serve those most in need. While this does reflect the Old Testament picture of the shepherd who feeds, heals and strengthens the sheep, it is doubtful whether this perspective captures the image in its entirety.

In the parables of Jesus I detect an added perspective which Christian traditions have de-emphasised. The Lukan parables in the fifteenth chapter value ‘the lost’ one(s). The inherent worth of the one needing care, ‘the lost’, is always highlighted at the climax as others rejoice in the restoration which is presented as beneficial to them. Persons must be helped not just because they are needy but because they are valued. Their value may well be enhanced through recognition of their neediness and awareness of vulnerability. The pastor, then, needs to be seen as both shepherd and sheep. This idea is well developed in the more useful contemporary image of the “wounded healer”

As Movement 4 continues we will explore this image which communicates both the expression of compassion, and the acceptance of personal vulnerability of pastors which is so often ignored. In reflections, researcher participants made statements indicating concern for pastors as needy persons. But in a context that sponsors the notion of clergy persons as spiritually superior to others, it is understandable that lay persons may place unreasonably high demands on them. It should not be surprising

³⁰ Messer, D., 1989, *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*, Nashville: Abingdon, p.39

that many Christians were either confused, angry, or felt a sense of abandonment when pastors left.

People started saying 'well if pastors can't trust God'. That's some of the counselling things I had, we had to cope with - how our pastors gone, because they always had this thing 'oh, all the pastors gone'. So you had to tell people that not because a decision is made that way, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are not caring. But situations sometimes you may have to make a decision that the other person can, but God is there. And so many times you had to deal with that because they didn't understand why the pastors have to leave. That was one of the problems.

(Interview CH-B, February 19, 2004)

Actual events in people's situation forced them to reconsider the trust placed in the church as an institution, since its principal servants had been found wanting.

They keep telling the congregation to have faith...but when the crunch come, they didn't have any at all! (SXP3, March 21, 2004)

I suppose the volcano show us that we ourselves are ministers. I think we should stop looking to the ministers for anything. We have the same powers as the ministers. (SXP3, March 21, 2004)

And the good that has come is that you realise you just have to put your confidence in God and depend on God because that's the only true shepherd. And you have to just be sympathetic too, and pray for the fearful shepherd and the faithless shepherd.

(CL-C, April 10, 2004)

The last comment from a lay leader is significant as it includes recognition of the fallibility and vulnerability of all persons, ordained ministers included. Clergy persons err and they also need the support and prayer of the laity. Persons are slow to accept this fact since notions of clergy superiority have been maintained at the expense of praxis that actualises the priesthood of all believers.

One lamentable consequence of condemnation of pastors who relocated abroad is that some clergy continue to live with a sense of shame regarding their own decisions. Among those I interviewed, only two had come to terms with their own position while others had no personal sense that the matter was resolved. There are still others whose crippling fear during their crisis was so obvious that their departure was critical to their survival, and possibly to the well-being of those who looked to them for leadership.

CL-D1: And there was a pastor. Please don't use his name...terribly afraid. Couldn't talk to him! All he had was his radio on, listening to these reports! Constantly!

CL-D2: ... he jumped in the bus...no shoes, he didn't put on...in 5 minutes he was here! Didn't think of picking up anybody.

CLD-1: And there's people down there, older people that don't have transportation.

CL-D2: He just hopped in the bus and he flew. He was up here in a moment.

* When you're fearful like that, you don't reason, eh.

CL-D1: No. The fear ate him up. He came up, you just could not- And we had Pastor Y here and his wife for 3 months, but they didn't run here there everywhere, no fear at all. And maybe it was there, but he just didn't show it. He didn't exhibit it.

(CL- D1& CL-D2, interview March 04, 2004)

Movement 4: Dialectical Hermeneutics to Appropriate Story / Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions

Because some pastors did not meet the Church's or the community's expectations with regard to their maintaining presence during the disaster, they were branded as persons who did not practise what they preached. As a result, they were denied the Christian compassion and sensitive understanding that should be the experience of all those to whom the church ministers. The tendency has been, anyway, to exclude clergy persons from among those officially needing pastoral care. While lay persons are generally accepted as having varying personal needs, clergy are more frequently understood as having strictly the place of privilege contingent upon responsibility. Where their duties are fulfilled, further privilege may be bestowed; but they do not receive extra care simply because their situation demands it. They are expected to give rather than to receive.

When a minister falls into the category of the neediest, as happened for many in the Montserrat disaster, a situation arises that questions institutional assumptions concerning pastoral care. As was seen in the case of Valerie in Chapter Four, this is linked to traditional presuppositions regarding the exercise of power in pastoral relationships, assumptions that undermine efforts to actualise the priesthood of all believers or to emphasise the charismatic dimension of congregational life (*political praxis*).

One common pastoral failure, too, has been the habit of ministers themselves to ignore their own needs and their own call to faithful practice. In her or his life as an individual, the ordained church leader is called to demonstrate a commitment to personal growth, to nurture a spirituality that reflects human need for divine grace, to show that ministry is all about redemption, that is, about restoring connections between God and humankind. Henri Nouwen challenges the Christian minister 'to break through [the] most basic alienation and live a life of total connectedness.' It is a life of communion with God- 'walking in God's presence'- and it is also living the search for human community since 'all ministry is based on personal and communal relationship with God.' However, it is only when the minister is first concerned to be with God, when action on behalf of others issues from 'unreserved love for God' that ministry serves God's purpose.³¹

Where ministers fail to nurture their own connectedness with God, they may well forget their vulnerability and fall prey to crisis demands that leave them fragmented, and curb their capacity to minister through their personal encounters with suffering. Nouwen describes the metaphor of the wounded healer who becomes for others a source of life derived through the reality of her or his own sense of woundedness and he suggests that today's minister must be three things:

1. An articulator of inner events - one who pays deliberate attention to and clarifies one's own inner confusion, consistently removing obstacles to one's growing spirituality, and is therefore able, through sensitivity, to help others recognize God's work in their lives.
2. A person of compassion - someone who can communicate God's loving forgiveness and who understands authority in terms of compassion, where humans chose to forgive one another thereby breaking through alienation
3. A contemplative critic - a person who, having listened to the inner voice of the Spirit, faces with courage and evil the pain in the world, and becomes an agent for change by pointing to signs of hope and promise in the present situation.³²

³¹ Nouwen, *Living Reminder*, p.29-32

³² Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, p.36-45

It does seem that the church as an institution frustrates the minister's self expression and ministry as a "wounded healer." In requiring clergy persons to serve as "shepherds" who are perceived pastoral caregivers rather than recipients, the church does not really sponsor their exploration of their own woundedness. If they cannot be wounded how can they be healers? What is their basis for expressing compassion and sensitivity to human need? If they must offer care from perceived positions of superiority, it is understandable that many shield their fallibility and in so doing deny their spiritual needs.

In a situation that draws attention away from rather than toward the pastor's own spiritual growth, then, the whole community suffers. The minister's own anxiety, alienation within the community, and lack of confidence in God's future are consequences of inattention to the spiritual development of clergy leaders. As Nouwen further explains, the pastor inspires hope in the community through being a constant reminder of God's presence, since disillusionment can come easily when the memory of God's love fades. 'Through memory,' he writes, 'love transcends the limits of time and offers hope at any moment of our lives.'³³ That remembering is vital in times of pain and hardship, for it is in such times that reflection on past experiences of trust, acceptance, confidence, forgiveness and love are most needed to keep the vision of the future alive in the midst of difficulty. Such is the life-sustaining spirituality to which the pastor, and the caring community in general, is called.

Real spirituality corresponds to God's will as manifest in historical situations. It is an attitude which refuses to collapse in despair in the face of enormous evil and suffering ... It is not satisfied merely coping with the situation, but confidently attempts the creative transformation of evil, sad, and subhuman situations.³⁴

Nurturing a robust spirituality, then, is one facet of the resistance against what Nouwen calls 'captivity', that which easily follows the basic human tendency towards alienation - becoming entrapped within seemingly hopeless situations. There a person is captured, enslaved so to speak, by a sort of myopia that will not see beyond her or his story to the promise of true human community.

³³ Nouwen, *Living Reminder*, p.46

³⁴ EATWOT India June 25-28, 1998 Statement of the Seminar "Search for life sustaining spiritualities in the context of globalization" in *Voices From the Third World*, 121, 2, p. 134-51

In my experience in Montserrat, not enough attention was paid to the personal spiritual needs of ministers, either by the ministers themselves or by the churches they served. The Ministers' Fellowship of the MCC tried to offer mutual support for membership through retreats and prayers. While individual communions attempted to organise clergy visits to the islands, these seemed to concentrate more on communicating solidarity with the people in general. Also, the scarcity of persons available to give long term support to ministers on Montserrat was problematic; maybe only those who lived there ever understood the unstable and demanding nature of life on the island during the volcanic eruptions. The official leadership of the institutional church did little to meet the needs of ministers serving in the crisis. The voices below of two ministers coming in to assist from outside the Montserrat/ Caribbean context are instructive.

BM1: ...what surprised us equally as the fact that some pastors had left was that no one literally came to the island, and as we got to know some of the people in other parts of the district, we became puzzled by their complete lack of understanding of what it was like to be on Montserrat. They simply had no conception of what was happening. They could make little financial gifts at times. They could go to talk about praying for Montserrat. But they really had no awareness of what it was like...

And then we were puzzled that the authorities in the district required the same sort of discipline, church discipline, on the island as if nothing had been happening!...

So demanding schedules, and forms

BM2: Official meetings

BM1: Every meeting must be held as laid down in the normal church programme, without any realisation that there was tremendous human need and deprivation on the very doorstep of the ministers, leaders on the island, that ought to be their priority without

BM2: Adding to the burden. It made no sense. It was a total mystery to us...caused us some impatience.

BM1: And equally puzzled that because there was no understanding of the situation, there was no volunteering of even part-time help for people to come for a short time from other parts of the district and do something practical about the real situation.

BM2: And there seemed to be no real support for the ministry that was left on island. In practical ways, giving a break, giving a holiday. In fact, they seemed to demand that the minister on island should go and do trips, should go and do church week ends elsewhere not to be relieved of that responsibility, but given it, and it didn't seem to be to publicise the need for of the people of Montserrat.

* More work.

BM2: More work.

BM1: And there could have been more support like our own from volunteers from the wider international. We would not be the only ones who would have responded to an invitation, a challenge to come and help for a time....

BM1: ...going back to the pastoral care and what was specifically different in the Montserrat situation, the need for pastoral care, there was this total need. Everyone was in need, given the exigency that people were in shelters, community buildings like churches and church halls were used as shelters, that when people wanted the privacy to speak confidentially, because they needed counselling really, there was not the space where they could find that private space, that confidential area, and that was a real need, and there was no provision for it. Because of the exigency, but it was really a prime need. And the other was that there was no care for the carers. You know, that if we had to assess the church's provision of pastoral care, that perhaps we had, the official pastors left, we've heard quite a lot of that, that time went on and the dismay of the people that their pastors had left. There was a real dismay, which was perhaps why we undeservedly got respect that we [did] but it was that there seemed to be not only a total lack of perception within the churches of the Leeward islands to the real need, but there was no structured support coming from the wider church for the pastors themselves. There was no system of relieving them, saying for instance a bishop or a chairman of a district should have been able to say 'you must have a break for one week; and we will pay for it. We'll finance it in order that you have the strength to go back.' Health issues were not taken on board, the health issues of pastors, fully, I think. And I mean there were the heroic ones who stayed... maybe there wouldn't have been so much leaving if they had been sustained been a more pastoral way.

(Interview with British ministers, June 28, 2004)

Through its omission to care for ministers, the church as an institution shows that insufficient treatment was given to following its own doctrines. Its teaching on human redemption, for example, requires a focus of the Christian message on communicating the divine grace that opens up the possibility for human transformation, for flawed persons to live in the image of God.

By neglecting its pastors, by its failure to prepare them for and to support them in crisis conditions, the church neglected its own teaching. It failed to use its human resources wisely, and overall, the delivery of pastoral care was far less effective than it could have been, even given the escalating crisis. This view has been expressed by some of the most faithful church goers on Montserrat.

* ...What would be your assessment of the church's contribution overall, its caring...did we miss any opportunities?

CL-D1: We weren't prepared at all. We were very, very ill prepared. Very. We didn't have an evacuation plan set up and we still don't. When CL-D2 mentioned that pastor ... we had elderly people in that village, I've tried to get an evacuation plan so we know where people are, and it just never came together. I think we could have done much much, much better ... And certain churches, some denominations did better than others... One thing that I didn't like, when aid came in ... I felt it should be for Montserrat, it shouldn't be for the ... X Church ... and I fought that... I had a hard time with that, if we're just gonna limit it to our members. I remember wondering what kind of witness..?

CL-D2: In a sense they wanted it restricted.

CL-D1: Yea. There were those that wanted it restricted it to just our members. And what a way to witness to somebody outside the church!

CL-D2: And that sort of hurt me. I don't like to, I don't even want to concentrate on that part of it but that's a part I didn't like.

(Interview CL- D1 & CL-D2, March 04, 2004)

The lay leaders above are critical of their own communion. This was usually the case. A survey of criticisms from lay leaders of other churches would reflect similar sentiments. Not one would be absolved from blame for failure to act in a truly coordinated fashion, using its resources to the best of its ability.

Movement 5: Decision / Response for Lived Christian Faith

The following responses would make for a more adequate pastoral response in the disaster situation.

1. Disaster Preparedness

The volcano crisis highlighted the churches' lack of readiness to provide pastoral care in disaster.

We weren't prepared at all. We were very, very ill prepared...didn't an evacuation plan set up and we still don't.

(CL- D1, March 04, 2004)

This comment gives a fitting summary regarding congregations' state of readiness to serve in disaster. The speaker cites only one church's failure to come up with an evacuation plan, the first official requirement placed on institutions. Families were

advised to have two days supplies that would be needed in the event of an evacuation, and institutions were to design and test their evacuation plans.

The un-preparedness of churches pervaded their whole life. As we have seen, church leaders and their followers did not understand ways in which they would be required to provide hospitality for relocated persons, as their attitudes towards these internal migrants revealed. Pastors and congregations held different expectations for each other. Very little support was provided for pastors by their institutions. The latter did not consider the scope of the pastoral task faced by the clergy. Though they had previous experience of hurricane, flood, and other disasters, there is little or no evidence that churches had actually given serious consideration to their role as providers of pastoral care during disaster. Churches might have expected that, as for previous crises, the bulk of the help they needed would have come from abroad; but in this case it did not. They seemed unable to access the available overseas pastoral support needed since they had waited until disaster struck to know just what persons' needs were. The "dependency syndrome" mentioned in the Introduction, took its toll when it came to the churches' preparation for the volcanic eruptions. Further, as already stated, the volcanic disaster took Montserrat residents by surprise. This was so despite the fact of documented pre-eruptive volcanic activity. The churches' indifference towards preparedness for disaster is reflective of the general population's inattention to the destructive potential of the volcano. That was truly a disaster 'waiting to happen'.

The maxim 'be prepared' is always a wise one in the context of disaster mitigation, and churches should help their pastors and general membership to be prepared. Being prepared for disaster implies many things. In the disaster prone region of the Eastern Caribbean, it means, at the very least, that institutions have pre-conceived plans for operations during disaster. This does not, of course, guarantee total success. Human life in general and pastoral care in particular is bound to experience failure. The aim is to prevent avoidable failure and to mitigate, where possible, its unavoidable effects through proper planning.

2. Take inventory of human resource potential

For social and political reasons, the best plans would involve the breadth of the membership of the churches.

The involvement of the affected people in the process of planning and implementing emergency assistance is important both in ensuring sensitivity to their situation, and because participation in determining one's fate has value in a democratic society.³⁵

This makes good sense for churches since it helps to maximize the human resource potential in the various congregations. Effective disaster planning, however, requires that clear but intersecting lines of communication be established. The church, an inherently hierarchical institution, already has established lines of authority. These need not be seen as a stumbling block. The fact that observing communication lines is already a part of church *modus operandi* could well serve to facilitate the organisation and coordination which must underlie successful strategies for disaster management and for the continued delivery of care during disaster, *provided the leadership is prepared to adjust from its hierarchical modes of communication to a networking approach*.

From a theological perspective, the persistence of old management styles with ministers dictating orders is bad stewardship that cannot serve human need in disaster. This does not support Christianity's belief in the priesthood of all believers, a teaching that could, as a result, amount to nothing more than hollow dogmatic posturing that frustrates general church membership and disables the church as an institution. Generally, and especially in disaster, a networking approach harnesses human resources and facilitates the delivery of pastoral care.

The communal context for ministry stresses the place of the caring community and the varied contexts in which pastoral care is offered. In illustrating his fundamental assumption that 'it is the caring community, inclusive of both laity and clergy that provides pastoral care', Patton states:

The communal dimension [emphasizes] the Christian community and its members as the messengers of care. In emphasizing human relationality, the communal dimension does not look at the ordained pastor apart from the community but in relation to it and as leader and facilitator of the relationships that take place as a part of it. Pastoral care is an action of the community which may be nurtured and led by the ordained pastor, but which is first a responsibility of the community.³⁶

³⁵ Clay, op. cit., p.12

³⁶ Patton, op. cit., p. 3,27

Sensitivity to context requires the churches to learn from public reactions during crisis. The earliest strategies of public information certainly whet the population's appetite for an understanding of what was going on. Buffonge's article "The Information Age" describing the people's search for knowledge about the volcano and the management of the crisis is instructive.³⁷ People demanded fuller involvement in the management of affairs that would affect their future, however uncertain that future might be. The tension between locals and external agencies was heightened when the local population felt that information was being withheld. The songs *We Want to Know More* and *Acting* are also expressions of Montserratian desire to be fully informed about the situation.³⁸

3. New Styles of Leadership

From local social, cultural, political and theological angles then, it is necessary for the church to take seriously people's need to dialogue and to participate in shared leadership.

The real challenge lies in the capacity of church leaders to be sufficiently flexible as to prevent authoritarian approaches that stymie life-affirming pastoral practices. The cry to enlist and to provide appropriate training for church leaders is an urgent one.

...leadership needs to be strong and varied enough to cope with the pastoral needs of the community which it is serving ... The leader's task is to co-ordinate, lead, inspire and train others in the ministry of every church. He [sic] is not meant primarily to do the work himself [sic], but to help others to discover their gifts and to develop them fully for the good of all. Leadership is not a form of domination. ... Leaders do not have to be experts in everything. They can always seek expert advice, if necessary, from others. ... Leaders should be discovering the hidden talents in the Church and releasing and guiding the inspiration and energies that people possess. They should be champions for freedom, and make sure that other people's initiative is not quenched.³⁹

Harper refers to some of the salient features of good pastoral leadership - flexibility, sensitivity, and courage; the ability to coordinate, to guide, to lead and to train; the

³⁷ Buffonge, C., 1996, *Volcano: A Chronicle of Montserrat's Volcanic Experience 1995-96*, Plymouth Montserrat. p.19

³⁸ Greenaway, R., "We Want to Know More", In *Little Island Live Volcano*. Francis, H., 1995, "Acting" in *Take the Road*

³⁹ Harper, M., 1977, *Let My People Grow. Ministry and Leadership in the Church*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, p.212

capacity for inspiration, a willingness to learn, a spirit of adventure, and a readiness for advocacy. The leader is simultaneously an enabler and a defender. Personal readiness for leadership entails disciplined training that concentrates on the development of skills as well as attitudes. Its hallmark is humble attitude and flexible aptitude. The preparedness of clergy persons and pastoral leaders must also be the focus of theological reflection for renewed Christian praxis.

A key concern is to provide ministerial training that helps pastors to become reflective, self-aware, compassionate, informed, yet humble leaders. There is no real justification for the common phenomenon of clergy persons exercising their institutional authority in such a manner as to stifle the charismatic functions of their congregations. That this obtained in Montserrat where persons faced disaster is regrettable. It only shows how vital it is for ministers to learn helpful approaches to foster good relationships within and around communities of faith.

Leadership training must emphasise the importance of relationality since the pastor needs to understand her/himself, as other persons, to be an essentially relational being. The pastoral leader needs to be aware that s/he is already the result of composite human experiences. Some awareness of how these experiences affect the pastor's psychological make-up can potentially enhance pastoral relationships; it may also help her/him to place these relationships in the context of personal history and anticipate potential problems that could threaten the integrity of the serving, caring congregation of which s/he is part. When problems can be anticipated, they may even be avoided or minimised in the interest of maintaining a smoother delivery system for pastoral care in general and for disaster situations in particular.

Pastoral training must be sensitive to the cultural context of congregations to be served. From a leadership perspective in Montserrat, I am well aware of a proneness to dependency among persons which the churches have not sought to address. This encourages in persons a sense of powerlessness. Strong courageous leadership is needed to facilitate a change in culture. In the case of the Montserrat disaster, the churches' approach to disaster relief, for example, may well have encouraged a culture of dependency at a time when they could have inspired persons to take greater responsibility for their actions and their future.

In support of this view, I cite a portion of an interview with an active churchman, a Montserratian who continued to live on the island throughout the eruptions.

* ...Do you have an assessment on the part the church has played? Do you have any words of commendation...do you see opportunities that were missed?

CL-D3: First of all I think that church people...gave adequate support to the people, and they had a chance to sort of live out their creed and their belief in practical ways. Like with the support and counselling...But perhaps the chance might have been taken, to perhaps use the crisis to foster greater spiritual awareness...I believe people have become more cynical and maybe materialistic and there have been a lot of cries, and the dependency syndrome has deepened. And I'm not sure the church has addressed that. I'm not sure that the church has addressed those in any profound way and in seeking to use the crisis to bring about spiritual transformation.

* It has been commented that generally, the churches give pastoral care without paying sufficient attention to the social and political context in which it delivers that care. Would you say this applies?

CL-D3: Yea. I think so. I think so. I'm not sure that the church has even addressed the whole idea of how people should respond whether in the business of saving, whether in the business of work, in the business of being good stewards of what resources they have, and so on... I just feel that we need to learn from these situations and apply them to life's problems. (Interview CL-D3, February 24, 2004)

Clearly there is the Christian responsibility to work towards the correction of the culture of dependency which could be a perennial deterrent to disaster recovery. As the speaker indicates, 'the business of being good stewards of what resources [people] have' is the business of pastoral care.

A new leadership approach is needed that values the gifts of the majority and encourages them to view themselves as agents of transformation. Church leadership needs to place a priority on communication, facilitating networks of gifted people to act in concert, even when they feel most vulnerable. In community, shared strength is a viable way to address individual weaknesses. This focus in leadership can work towards the empowerment of congregations, so that acting together, they will be better placed to inspire hope and encourage resiliency in their communities during the disasters that lie ahead.

Where pastoral leaders focus on their ministry as bearers of hope in despairing situations, transformation is encouraged. The pastor's role is to symbolise the incarnation, to remind the congregation that its suffering is more than a human experience. Through the incarnation, God has entered into human experience and shares with the most vulnerable in seemingly hopeless conditions. God empathises

with humans and sustains them to the point of victory.⁴⁰ The pastor is to communicate this sense of divine presence in the stories of those who suffer. Their awareness of the immanent God empowers believers to move toward God, who in the Christ event has secured victory for those who suffer with Christ. As they expect and appropriate divine revelation in the context of their own historicity, suffering people find hope. Congregations are thereby helped to appreciate God's strength being perfected in their weakness. For while in Christ the promises of God are 'confirmed and validated' they await fulfilment in human history.⁴¹

The agenda for empowering congregations must focus on the roles these groups play in the transformation of God's wide world. Because the overly clerical, hierarchical organisation of churches has hindered their effectiveness in serving out their mission, change must be encouraged that allows groups acting on behalf of Christianity, to mobilize community resources in the search for transcendence.

In keeping with the recognition of the difference between church and gospel, Christians need to admit the possibility of the activity of God outside of spheres dominated by the church since ... God enjoys the freedom to operate...

In keeping with this understanding...Christians would do well to ... guard against idolising existing ecclesiastical structures...⁴²

The exact shape and form that relevant Christian action and pastoral care movements take will be determined by the need in the particular context. In situations of acute transitoriness such as characterised the Montserrat volcanic disaster, groups would be released from bureaucratic restrictions and pietistic confinements to appropriate resources arising amidst the changing scenes, and to use these as vehicles for promoting human healing and wholeness.

In the theological reflections and analyses presented in the next chapter, a cultural hermeneutic is deepened to access coping and healing resources that served Montserrat well.

⁴⁰ Zurheide, J., 1997, *When Faith Is Tested: Pastoral Responses to Suffering and Tragic Death*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p. 50

⁴¹ Motlmann, J., *Theology of Hope*, p. 228

⁴² Smith, A., 1984, *Real Roots and Potted Plants*, Mandeville, Jamaica: Eureka Press, p.33

4. Pastoral Care for Pastors.

One of the more obvious needs highlighted in the Montserrat situation is the provision of adequate care for pastors and their families. If uncared for, caregivers become isolated. Where their needs are taken seriously, they are helped to communicate hope to those with whom they interact. They can be more effective as “wounded healers”. A congregation’s capacity to respond, then, is enhanced where its pastoral leaders are supported and they are, in turn, better placed to assess and to help develop the resources of the church.

Provision of effective care for pastors will involve allocation of resources towards their physical, emotional and mental health. It requires further a review of institutional attitudes to the corresponding roles of clergy and laity, styles of leadership, the training of pastors and disaster preparedness. Renewed praxis in these areas will impact on the wellbeing of pastors.

Conclusion

The three reflections in this chapter highlighted some pre-existing problems - the churches’ lack of readiness to give pastoral care to persons including pastors; their failure to utilise their human resource potential and to actualise the priesthood of all believers; their retention of leadership styles that work against the empowerment of their membership and continue to foster a spirit of dependency - that complicated human need in the situation of the Montserrat volcanic disaster. They help to illustrate how pastoral care can, by default, contribute to “accidents waiting to happen.” The church’s failure to address inconsistencies between its verbalised and actualised professions of faith is deeply rooted. It derives from a somewhat misconstrued self-image which becomes frustrating to its self expression. This becomes evident in two related aspects of church life – in the exercise of leadership and in the realisation of its corporate ministry. Its ministers, for example, have not been helped to serve as “wounded healers’ in situations where healing was the most obvious need.

In this research, there are revelations concerning the failure of pastoral care to pursue its reconciling and prophetic roles in the context of the Montserrat disaster. The one relates to the other. Unresolved personal needs and interpersonal differences do not make for healing and wholeness at the broader social level.

How then, can the church pursue pastoral care in the context of its own failings? During the course of this research, participation in focus groups using *shared Christian praxis* for theological reflection provided an opportunity for persons to uphold the dignity of difference. In ways that could not have been anticipated, the sessions afforded an atmosphere in which participants entered into dialogue on unresolved differences in the wider Montserrat community. The successful use of the method suggests its suitability as a mechanism for facilitating the intercultural dialogue which has been identified as crucial to the delivery of Christian pastoral care.

Pastoral Care in Disaster: A Theological Reflection

Chapter Six: Analysis of Pastoral Care in the Montserrat Volcanic Crisis- Part Two

Introduction

In the three reflections presented in the previous chapter, the description of present praxis (Movement 1) came directly from the statements of research participants in a focus group setting. The discussion was then broadened to include statements of other persons and groups. A different pattern is used here. The movements derive, not from one transcript initially, but rather from the whole conversation represented in Figure 5 (page 73). Reflection on a collage of research experiences gives a more comprehensive picture of the research. The account of such experiences is necessarily selective and cannot, therefore, be taken as the totality of reflections engaged in throughout the research process.¹ Such treatment is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Like the previous thematic discourses, however, the theological reflection presented in this chapter is a composite and layered construction connecting the researcher's thinking with a range of considerations from research participants. Whereas in the field research setting voices outside the focus groups were brought into the *shared Christian praxis* conversation by group members representing their contexts and by the researcher in the role of chief interlocutor, in this chapter some of the outside voices speak directly.² In this way, the final thematic reflection is more illustrative of the researcher's effort at collating the varying factors which must inform a pastoral theology that balances cultural sensitivity and contextual relevance with faithfulness

¹ As mentioned in Chapter Two, the concerns dealt with in Chapter Six were the ones arising most frequently in the research situation. These were not necessarily reflected on with the same intensity as issues discussed in Chapter Five, but were repeated far more often in interviews and other statements coming from residents. I repeat here a statement from the methodology: 'The themes discussed in Chapter Six cover a broader spectrum of community concern [than those encountered in Chapter Five]. What seemed initially to be one person's point of view was repeated in a range of sub-contexts and demanded attention. The conversation in Chapter Six attempts to ... achieve a higher level of reliability in the overall selection of themes presented in the research report.'

² The following codes are used for voices from outside the focus groups: A1-5 for artists, BM 1-2 for business managers, DM for Disaster management personnel, CC 1- 2 for community caregivers, CoL 1-2 for community leaders, CS 1-2 for senior citizens, HP for a health professional, PC for a lay pastoral caregiver, and PS for public service managers.

to a Christian perspective on life. In particular, the presence of multiple voices helps the reader to follow both the intercultural and intra-cultural dialogue which makes such articulation possible.

Reflection on Disaster as opportunity for positive change

Movement 1: Naming / Expressing Present Praxis

Notwithstanding its disastrous potential, the Montserrat volcanic crisis has had positive effects as evidenced in a burst of creativity. Associated with this creativity there have been the development of culturally consonant support mechanisms, advances in intercultural learning, growth in religious / spiritual faith for many, and healing engagement in theological reflection.

Those responding to dire human need often encounter levels of personal and communal resourcefulness that defy the limitations imposed upon people in crisis situations. This happened in Montserrat during the volcanic eruptions. The presence of a resolve that promotes survival can be validated by the observations of visitors to the island.

Montserratians are a people under siege, yet they're going about their disrupted lives with equanimity and determination. "We won't give up so easy..."

Montserratians under siege are blessed with many things: a sense of community, perseverance, humor, resourcefulness.³

One overseas commentator describes Davison's *Volcano in Paradise*, a journalistic account of the Montserrat volcanic situation as

a riveting true story of natural horrors and political questions, of the overwhelming power of the most terrifying of the earth's phenomena- and of the undefeated spirit of the people of this former paradise.⁴

Reflecting on the possibilities in the volcanic crisis, a local artist had this to say.

What else good came out it? Well it's the obvious thing and we're probably sort of tired of hearing the word resilience, but it brought out the resilience of the people.⁵ It was very heartening to know ... that

³ Williams, A., 1997, "Montserrat Under the Volcano", *National Geographic*, 192, 1, p. 66, 75.

⁴ Davison, op. cit., inside cover

⁵ The speaker is not suggesting that resilience is a problem. Visitors to the island usually comment on the resilience of the people. Residents accept and celebrate this resilience. However in Montserrat (and similar cultural contexts), there is lower tolerance for repetition of the same statements than there

people were prepared to stay here in spite of the fact that they were offered the package...I think Montserrat is probably the only country where everybody who live here actually chose, made a conscious decision that they want to...live in Montserrat.

(Interview A1, February 10, 2004)

While the eruptions of the Soufrière Hills Volcano meant extreme adversity for many, indications are that this crisis did have positive effects. Presented below are findings in the first phase of a study to determine how people coped during the disaster.

The highest proportion of respondents reported increased self-esteem and personal growth... Participants revealed that they had benefited ... they saw that they could cope and survive in spite of what had happened...were able to develop areas within themselves that they hadn't anticipated such as writing, decision-making, new goals,...strengthened spirituality ... increased faith, trust, and re-evaluation of religious beliefs. The fact that life changed in some way by either getting better or starting over...Greater appreciation of life... improved relationships ... were seen as some of the best things coming out of the situation. ... Three percent of the respondents stated that "nothing" good came out of the experience.

...Participants learned much through their experiences in relationship to the eruption of the volcano. Some of the themes and advice to others included: "Take one day at a time and be prepared for a rainy one. Expect the worst, hope for the best. Make use of opportunities and your inner strengths - and believe in these strengths to cope. Cry, talk to a friend, get help, face your problems, pray and rely on God, there is a reason for what you are going through. Relax. The material is not important. Everyone reacts differently. Form self-help groups. Never give up and believe the best will come."⁶

One of the most obvious benefits issuing from the context of disaster in Montserrat was a burst of artistic creativity among persons there. Montserratian poet, Professor Sir Howard Fergus, comments on the emergence of a "disaster literature."

I think one needs energy to fund creative writing. And the crisis provided a lot of emotional energy so that people are writing from their hearts... one has to curb oneself and say 'stop, you need to stop writing about this volcano.' But it has dominated our consciousness, and people write about their experiences, what they feel and what is

is elsewhere. The speaker is simply apologizing for repeating something that I would have heard over and over again.

⁶ Ring, K, 2002, "Coping with Loss in Montserrat: A follow up study with community leaders 1999/2002." <http://www.uwichill.edu.bb/bnccde/montserrat/conference/papers/ring.htm>

This research will refer to participant responses 2 years later which indicate changed perspectives and personal growth.

prompting them... The songs, people like Randy Greenaway. I think he has done tremendously ... [They capture] peoples' thinking and perceptions and feelings...there's something therapeutic about writing as well. It's one way of coping with, of getting it out of your system...

.... In fact, a disaster literature has emerged in Montserrat...the idea didn't originate with me. Archie Markham who is Professor of Creative Writing at Sheffield Hallam University in England, who is a Montserratian, has done quite a bit of writing about the disaster as well...he was the first person to use the term 'a disaster literature', and in fact, we do have a disaster literature. I think, more than any other Caribbean country, we have people who have written about volcanoes and hurricanes.

(Interview with Professor Sir Howard Fergus, February 24, 2004)

There is little doubt that the volcanic eruptions ushered in an era of creativity expressed in life occupations such as crop farming and building construction, but most noticeable in the arts, especially music, drama, photography and creative writing.

Since the crisis, you have a lot of creativity...It has been good for creativity but in terms of performing, finding venues to perform, having...so many of your talented performers have gone overseas, you're having to build groups from scratch again...We have no shortage of material to work with because our creative people, their juices have just been flowing. (Interview A2, February 13, 2004)

One of the obvious things that was good is that it brought out creativity. I can start with me. I began thinking deeper. I believe I have written better songs since the crisis than before the crisis. And not only me. I mean you've heard a lot of very good songs from people like Randy Greenaway. Some of the calypsonians have written some really good songs both here in Montserrat and overseas based writers. (Interview A1, February 10, 2004)

Interestingly, the songwriter mentioned in two of three interviews just cited had not sought intentionally, certainly not initially, to inspire hope or to produce resources that would facilitate pastoral support for residents. His reaction to my suggestion that he played an important leadership role is telling.

I don't see myself as...playing a leadership role. I was creating a documentary, documenting the happenings in my country and basically many of the songs are just documents. Somebody listening to the songs could capture the spirit of the island, the concerns, the fears, the responses, and in some cases actually, what was happening with the volcano. The different songs are basically just commenting on what's happening at this period. When we did the *Little Island*,

Live Volcano for the children we actually put it in order, in the actual sequence.

(Interview with Randall Greenaway, March 02, 2004)

But the production *Little Island, Live Volcano* referred to here, has turned out to be much more than a simple document recording what had happened previously. It has proven to be a most valuable resource for coping, and for stimulating hope. It will be mentioned again in the section entitled “The Development of Culturally Consonant Modes of Care”.

The creativity and resourcefulness referred to by journalists and interviewees presented in this chapter are evident in the current material culture of Montserrat and is reflected in the statements of research participants. These statements include spoken and written texts such as recalled histories, theological reflections, recorded music, drama and creative writing. The varied texts of Montserrat suggest that the collective creative responses include:

1. Development of culturally consonant modes of care
2. Advancement in intercultural learning
3. Growth in religious and spiritual faith
4. Critical theological reflection on disaster.

1. Development of Culturally Consonant Modes of Care

Local means for caring are among the most helpful resources to emerge from the Montserrat volcanic crisis. Much of the creative writing, music and drama already cited qualify as such. I will give here three examples of songs that fit into this category because of their potential as instruments for motivation. Other examples will be discussed as the reflection continues. Some local successes in pastoral care, though not given in the name of the church, will be presented in subsequent movements.

In his 1995 release *The Crisis We Face*, “Cupid”, a calypsonian, sought to boost the community’s will to survive.

We are a nation faced with the worst crisis in our history.
...But deep within I do believe we will survive.

Out of all this hurt there must be some good that can be derived⁷

In 1998, songwriter “Zunky” celebrated this sense of defiance in *Montserratians Won’t Say Die*.⁸ “Belonger”, a third singer, added her voice in 2001:

Still home, still nice. Yes, it’s a place you can come home to.

Still home, still nice. Don’t stay away whatever you do.

Still home, still nice. It’s paradise with a touch of ash.

No matter where in the world you roam, Montserrat is home sweet home.⁹

The three songs mentioned are just a sample of the musical pieces that have subliminally influenced people into building their capacity to survive traumatic conditions. No less than songs there are other art forms that have been helpful in this regard. There are strong suggestions that messages communicated in art forms helped people in Montserrat to cope during the volcanic crisis. This view stated below is given by a local clinical psychologist with long-term experience of living and working in Montserrat, the Caribbean and the United States. She was involved in the production and utilisation of *Little Island Live Volcano*.

* Have you, in your reflections, discovered or thought about resources of Montserrat or Montserratians as a people that are available to us, that maybe you haven’t seen elsewhere, that help people cope?

CT: The things that we have produced in themselves, whether it’s the singing *Still Home Still Nice*, something else, or Cupid singing, or *The Voices of Our Children* or all the stuff that came out, in terms of the literary art, especially. I think each of them could stand on their own as, should I say indicators or resources that you’re talking about. All of those products can be used to great advantage...

(Interview with Dr. Carol Tuitt, Clinical psychologist, February 17, 2004)

The speaker above refers to written and performed arts as useful resources for coping, but a wider range of symbols and images are included in that category. Some persons claim that they were encouraged by the visual images such as T-shirts with the message ‘Tough times don’t last; tough people do.’ Of course, subliminal effects are certainly not easily quantifiable and not necessarily verifiable. But a dismissal of

⁷ Francis, H., 1995, “The Crisis We Face” in *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, Olveston: Unlimited Axxess Studios

⁸ Greenaway, R., 2000, “Montserratians Won’t Say Die”, Baker Hill: Zunky Music Ltd.

⁹ Ryan, P., 2002, “Still Home Still Nice” in *Still Home Still Nice*, Olveston: Unlimited Axxess Studios

the motivational potential of these songs, images, and other messages in the absence of empirical evidence of the same would be counterproductive. Such rationalism could only serve to frustrate the intercultural communication which makes for a contextually relevant pastoral theology.

2. Advancement in Intercultural Learning

In its presentation of data from the research context, this study has highlighted some of the difficulties associated with the interchanges that occurred between local subcultures and cultures at the regional and global levels. There have also been positive developments resulting from intercultural exchanges. One only has to look at the layout of the new housing estates to detect input from outside Montserrat. Styles of housing construction have been noticeably influenced by professional services and semi-skilled labour coming in from abroad. While the processes of harmonising cultural influences were unnecessarily painful, there are positive lessons to be learned. These will be reflected on in subsequent movements.

3. Growth in Religious and Spiritual Faith

The volcanic eruptions started over eleven years ago. Since then, persons living through the disaster have grown spiritually. Some are more overtly religious, even though many of them adhere less slavishly to the prescriptions of their various churches. *Their statements suggest that as the volcanic eruptions continued, persons engaged in continual reappraisal of their values and focussed on spiritual resources for coping.*

In May 1999 and July 2002, a UWI research study involving 30 community leaders investigated their physical and symbolic losses and associated responses and strengths for coping. Participants' statements given two years later contrasted sharply with their earlier responses. In 2002, they cited spiritual growth and the support of persons as the most significant coping resources.

In 1999 the best outcome of the disaster was increased self-esteem and personal growth. This outcome wasn't even mentioned in the later study. What replaced it was increased reliance on God. More exploration is needed in this area to understand the reasons for this change in emphasis. Is it based on fear and helplessness, or acceptance and surrender? The significance of spirituality emerged as advice to others as the majority of respondents was to believe and trust in God [sic]. And another significant difference was that the dedication and support of friends and family was an outcome that was new on the

2002 study and absent in the earlier one. Respondents stated that they had increased appreciation of this support.¹⁰

Ring raises the valid question as to why the change in emphasis in participant evaluation of disaster outcomes. 'Is it based on fear and helplessness, or acceptance and surrender?' We shall explore possible answers to this question as we reflect further. Suffice it to say here that one area in which in which some persons do seem to have grown spiritually is the rejection of a fatalistic outlook and the acceptance of healthier responses towards the emotion of fear.

4. Critical Theological Reflection on Disaster

The question was raised as to whether the self-evaluation given by participants in a coping seminar was 'based on fear and helplessness, or acceptance and surrender?' In answer, this research will present evidence of critical theological reflection in the focus groups and in the wider Montserrat community in the context of the volcanic eruptions. Theological reflection provided them with an avenue for dealing with the deep questions of meaning they were facing, and became a means of healing and coping. The following paragraphs give some indication of theological reflection, but the subject will be pursued further as this reflection continues.

During field research conducted in 2004 there were frequent references to the crisis as 'a learning experience'. A lay pastoral caregiver said:

The volcano is a learning experience for all of us because nobody in Montserrat has ever experienced living with a live volcano. The time before when they said the volcano erupted...millions of years, I don't know anything about those but, in living memory.

(Interview PC1, March 24, 2004)

In the interview that follows the opinion of a public service manager is presented.

PS2: There were in fact lessons to be learnt. But it's what. Are you going say is because you bad why God want to destroy us? No! I don't think so, because I don't think we were worse than anybody, neither am I claiming to be better than anybody else. And God is a just God. It said he makes his rain to fall on the just and the unjust, so then, whatever he is going to pass on, and scripture bears this out. There are times when his people have to go through the tribulation also in order to be come out tried and proven. So it's not case of that. And as an individual, however, I also see events as, totally, experiences. I don't believe that people have problems. I believe that you are getting an

¹⁰ Ring, op. cit.

opportunity to, you know, to improve some skill you have, or it's preparing you to deal with a situation for which you will be placed in, in time to come.

* OK. Are you saying that you see it more as preparation or as challenge rather than as-

PS2: Challenge and preparation. It's a combination of both in my approach to events.

(Interview PS2, March 11, 2004)

Through reflecting on experience, many persons dismissed the theological perspective of divine punishment, although more often than not, they would admit that, according to Christian teaching, they were deserving of punishment. It was just that this traditional explanation did not tally with their lived experience. As we shall see later, the position taken by the community caregiver in the transcript following was taken by SXP1 as the group reflected. It was the usual position of interviewees who often brought up the issue without any prompting. The general view was that Montserratians were not the worst people and would not have been singled out for punishment even if God were to punish.

CC: Yes. So there are all sorts of theories. Some people come and they say that is because Montserrat people are so wicked, God is punishing them.

* What's your view on that?

CC: I don't think so. I don't think so, I'm not saying Montserrat people not [wicked.] I do not personally think that it is any punishment from God. It may be, but I cannot say... there may be [wicked] people, not there may be. There are [wicked] people. Many of us who are wicked and we don't worry about others, but ...I think God honours our faith. And I...cannot say that I believe that God was punishing us. Just recently I was speaking with this man and he said Oh, God was shaking up the people...Before they take the shaking, before they give heed, they prefer to go. But from a commonsense standpoint, those of us who are living here know that if you had 10, 000 people at that time, and they were occupying 39 square miles, and then something like that happen, and now you are occupying a third of that portion, where would they live?

...

We'd be dead. We'd be crushing one another... well people have the liberty to think what they think... Montserrat is a volcanic island and volcano was there lying down. The time just come...we are not different to other people in different parts of the world, there so many disasters are taking place. Seeing the disaster in Montserrat I don't think that people are saying well because people are wicked in those places why the things are happening. So why they have to think that is because we are wicked...It should be a spiritual awakening for us, but

not necessarily that God is punishing us. And I'm not defending the wickedness, because it is there. We know it is there...I still think we have a lot of blessings to count... I think that we should still praise God in spite of what has happened... Our situation could have been worse...

* That's true.

CC: I give God thanks for the privilege of being here, for being able to do what little bit I can do, help those who I come in contact with ... I thank God every day for a functional body, because even though I cannot say that I am 100% well, I function. I do what I have to do. I am active and I thank God for that, seeing that I know Christ, because that makes all the difference.

(Interview CC, March 24, 2004)

This caregiver clearly rejects the suggestion of divine punishment. Like many others, she admits that there is overwhelming evidence of human imperfection, and weighs this reality against the graciousness of God known in her experience. *Historical hooks* play an important part in informing her theology. Her reflection here illustrates how someone receives revelatory insights in the context of her own historicity. She chooses to assess her own gifts from God as facilitating her service to others. Service is then seen more as a privilege than as responsibility. This is one way in which the experience of loss during the eruptions prompted individuals and groups to theologise in ways that helped them to look forward towards God's possibilities. Her engagement in *theological thinking* is revealed here.

If ongoing reflection meant that persons had refined their theological definitions of the situation, one could look for new attempts to answer traditional questions of theodicy. At least one song, *The Ultimate Sacrifice* deals with the matter directly by reference to fatalities during the disaster.¹¹ The songwriter asks questions and suggests some answers. On reflection, it is useful that he was given the opportunity to elaborate on the figurative expressions which speak to the sources of people's anger.¹² Through his statement 'My heart burns, my blood boils, my feet aches' he seeks to communicate some idea of the sources of anger in the wider community. Blame is placed on human agents for their omissions and failings. While those who died take responsibility for their actions, no culpability is ascribed to the deceased. They are seen as having lived and died purposefully. So firm is the singer's belief

¹¹ Francis, H., 1997, "The Ultimate Sacrifice" in *Ultimate Sacrifice*, Olveston: Unlimited Access Studios. See App. 1.9.

¹² A transcript of this interview given in Appendix 5 – (A1, February 10, 2004)

that their lives were not wasted, he suggests that they should have no regret concerning their choice to ignore hazard warnings.

And I wonder would I change anything if there's a second time around;

Yes, many would say I'm foolish,

Should have trod the path of safety instead

But as a farmer making my daily bread

And in the meantime my country must be fed.¹³

It must be stated here that this position has been challenged by others who see the deaths as senseless loss of life.

And even the people that died up on the east, it was civil disobedience, because they were told to come out, and they refused. That's why I never used to go to the commemoration because I find that we were commemorating civil disobedience. I'm sorry. First year, yes, the memorial; but after that...mi no purport no civil disobedience. They were supposed to move. (SXP1)

I will say exactly what I said in that coroner's chair. I think everybody knew the risks. I'm not sure they appreciated the risks. But persons have their own individuality. They can make their own decisions on the risks that they face.

(Interview DM3, March 03, 2004)

But for the singer, death is equated with giving life.

But if we now get our act together

Then I would not have died in vain.¹⁴

If the country were to learn the lessons imparted through tragedy, then loss of life could be seen as contributing to improved living arrangements for those who survive. The singer, therefore, thinks, in a Moltmannian fashion, in terms of "giving of life" rather than "loss of life" and interprets the tragedy of June 25 1997 in terms of the cross. His explanation has a Christological focus.

No greater love can one show than he who his life lay down...¹⁵

He describes the farmers as being Christ-like in having made *the ultimate sacrifice*. Like the other statements by research participants cited above, his clearly show that

¹³ Francis, H., *Ultimate Sacrifice*

¹⁴ idem

¹⁵ Francis, H., *Ultimate Sacrifice*

ongoing theological reflection has been happening in the situation of the Montserrat volcanic disaster.

Movement 2: Critical Reflection on Present Action

1. Development of Culturally Consonant Modes of Care

What possible explanations are there for the increased production of artistic material which has been instrumental for the healing of individuals and community in the context of the volcanic eruptions? Is the healing potential of the art forms by any means explainable? While there is no simple explanation for what motivates people in crisis, one can identify possible contributory factors to Montserratian survival and flourishing during the volcanic eruptions. Some insight is also available help us to understand local cultural art forms as instruments of healing.

Perspectives from Psychology

As has been stated before, communication through art forms motivated persons in Montserrat and helped them to cope during the volcanic crisis. Maybe some already had within themselves a high capacity to hope or were otherwise encouraged to hope. Snyder looks at hope from the perspective of psychology and sees it as indispensable to a person's coping strategy.

Do persons who are higher as compared with lower in dispositional hope actually have better outcomes in their lives? The answer is a resounding yes...

The advantages of elevated hope are many. Higher as compared with lower hope people have a greater number of goals, have more difficult goals, have success at achieving their goals, perceive their goals as challenges, have greater happiness and less distress, have superior coping skills, recover better from physical injury, and report less burnout at work, to name but a few advantages...

Hope... is not a vague concept...When a concrete goal becomes imaginable, perhaps through the efforts of a counselor this alone can unleash the person's sense of energy to pursue the goal.¹⁶

¹⁶ Snyder, C., 1995, "Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Nurturing Hope", *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 73, 355-359. p.357

See also Schaefer, C., Coyne, J. et. al., 1991, "The Health Related Functions of Social Support" *Journal of Behavioural Medicine*, 4, 381-406

The evidence from Montserrat strongly suggests that indigenous art forms served to stimulate, to encourage, or to boost hope. These artistic expressions helped residents to view their experiences of disaster as manageable challenges rather than as contributors to inevitable doom. They were therefore better placed to cope with these challenges, to envisage and to participate in their subsequent recovery.

History of Survival

The people's ability to cope under stress is nothing new to Montserrat. In its cultural memory there are experiences of natural and social disasters, not the least being the traumas of slavery and colonialism. It is indeed likely that these *history hooks* were positive boosts for the human spirit during the eruptions. As one visiting researcher observed,

In reality, it has been 150 years since slavery disappeared and the story of Montserratian people today is not merely one of triumph over former colonial evils, but of coping, slowly but successfully, with a series of economic and natural disasters that have occasionally given the island an exceptionally hard time...

Slavery, shifting economic climates, and major natural disasters are part of the reality of the past and help explain the present.¹⁷

Although the cultural memory of trauma had predictable ill effects such as excessive criticisms and assignment of blame, the memory of survival in traumatic conditions could be a boost to people's resistance and resilience in disaster. For African slaves and their descendants, art forms had been significant elements in their resistance and survival mechanisms.¹⁸ For this reason, there were repeated efforts at legislating against the use of musical instruments by slaves. In Montserrat, for example, a 1736 decree outlawed the beating of drums, gourds or casks, the blowing of horns or shells, or the use of loud instruments 'for the diversion or entertainment of slaves' on the plantations.¹⁹ That these and other musical instruments such as the tambourine and the babala survived this ban is testimony to both to the value their users placed on them and to the effectiveness of slave resistance.

¹⁷ Butler, J., 1986, "Montserrat National Park: Home of Beautiful Women and Mountain Chickens", *Environment Park News*, 22,3,15-9, p.17

¹⁸ Messenger, J., 1973, "African Retentions in Montserrat", *African Arts Vol.4, No.4*, 5-9, p.6

¹⁹English, op. cit., p.68

The chanting of songs, drumming and dances associated with the *maroon* were forbidden as slave owners feared that these practices encouraged slave rebellion.²⁰ Irish explains that whereas in larger territories slave *marronage* involved secret flights to hidden interiors, Montserrat's small size and topography precluded such escape. The slaves, through their music and dancing, 'achieved a spiritual and cultural plane of communion right on the estates and before the masters' eyes'.²¹ It should come as no surprise then, that in times of communal trauma, the descendants of African slaves would relate to rituals of song and dance as means of catharsis and mechanisms for coping. It was noted in Chapter Two that the volcanic crisis presented opportunity for Montserratians to revisit the harsh experiences of their slave ancestry and to trigger related cultural trauma. In the same vein, *history hooks* could have induced survival techniques similar to those that succeeded in the past.

2. Advancement in Intercultural Learning

In Movement 1 it was noted that some positive results accrued from intercultural exchanges occurring in the context of the Montserrat volcanic crisis. In Movement 2 we look at certain underlying factors and reflect critically upon them.

Challenging Cultural History

Once it became obvious that the southern areas of Montserrat would be uninhabitable for an extended period, it was necessary to find land for housing. That was a major hurdle to overcome as most of the land in the northern areas was privately owned. Lands belonging to nationals resident abroad represented their connection to the island, and were being retained for their retirement homes or for succeeding generations, since in local culture, families wanted to hold their extended family plots in perpetuity. The problem of scarcity also obtained in relation to agricultural lands since the most productive cultivated areas were on the flanks of the volcano.

The crisis in human need arising from the displacement of thousands of people seemed to expose the problem of human greed. Why the great difficulty in accessing unused lands to meet the desperate needs of the community? Further, it seemed irrational that displaced persons would be concerned about the ownership of land and

²⁰ Kirnon, H., 1925, *Montserrat and Montserratians*, N.Y.: Hodge Kirnon, p.48

²¹ Irish, G., 1974, *Alliouagana in Agony: Notes on Montserrat Politics*, Montserrat: JAG Productions, p.17

houses rather than be content to secure whatever accommodation was offered them. But to condemn people's attitudes and behaviours in the situation as manifestations of greed would not help. To understand the problem, one needed to understand the culture of land and to take local attitudes to home ownership into consideration (*cultural connotations*).

When Montserratians attempt to explain their position, in the absence of any background knowledge on the part of the hearers, they may seem overbearing and may even provoke such inexcusable retorts as given by the British Minister for International Development.²² Reading the interview portion presented here, one may intuit the challenge presented.

HP: Montserratians, we're accustomed to our independence...to own our home, drive our cars, have a job; that's our way of life. And I think for many of us, we find it difficult to go and live with a lower standard of living.

*: But then it wasn't always so –

HP: That's true, because I remember growing up as a child. I always tell my son about it...I grew up with about ten of us living in a house and we all slept on the floor, on banana bushes, head and toe ...We grow up poor... but despite that a lot of poorness was there, our grandparents saved. Don't ask me how they saved ... even it was not as flamboyant as it is now, they too, had that thing in their heads that they had to save...that is our culture. Our culture is that we are supposed to live at a certain standard. I think it's something that we tell ourselves, that we're supposed to have a certain way of living. So for us, is like, we can't get down there... I know a lot of people will look around and say 'What? Volcano in Montserrat and everybody building these big old houses still you know! But you tell them 'it's what they're accustomed to.' So some place I went to, this country and the houses were so close together. I said 'My goodness! I can't live like this!'

(Interview with Health Professional, March 26, 2004)

Obviously, the local culture of land presented difficulties. Change was desirable but agents of change needed first to recognise that the people's sense of place derived from their relationship with the land which had more than economic worth. They

²² The minister, in a live interview on ZJB Radio in August 1997, told Montserratians that 'money doesn't grow on trees' and that they would 'be asking for golden elephants next.'

needed to learn that land is linked to one's sense of identity, that family land has cultural and spiritual significance and is seen as a connecting line to one's ancestry.²³

If the official report of HMG's evaluation of its response to the Montserrat volcanic crisis is to be taken seriously, it does seem that intercultural dialogue paved the way for a more effective response. During the course of the eruptions, HMG altered its unilateral approach to the handling of the crisis, establishing a local DFID office to work in partnership with the island government. This type of adjustment was encouraged by British nationals who had first hand experience of living in Montserrat. Here is an excerpt from a report presented by one of them.

I spoke to aid workers on the island who seemed rather bemused that they should be accommodated in luxury houses when they were more used to sleeping in tents when working on aid projects in either war torn or famine ravaged parts of the world.

Herein lies the dilemma. The majority of Montserratians owned their houses, had their own cars, had lived for part of their lives in the UK, Canada or the USA. The older generation who had returned home had children who worked abroad and whose remittances maintained a good standard of living for their relatives. The islanders are in general terms an educated and sophisticated people. They required help, direction and financial support to overcome a catastrophe of considerable magnitude and the ODA do not appear to be equipped to deal with this type of assignment...²⁴

HMG's changed approach to the housing situation was met by changing local attitudes to the possession of land. The idea of land as a real estate commodity was not new, but real estate subdivisions had been concentrated in certain areas and catered largely to affluent North Americans. More recently, local families have become more open to viewing the sale of excess land as investment opportunities. They still retain plots for future family housing but have adjusted their stance towards retention of entire family holdings. As a result, the reconstruction of residential, commercial and industrial infrastructure is well underway. All of this was possible because Montserratians became willing to take a new look at attitudes to land which, while having important cultural value, served to work against betterment of the community in a time of crisis. Serious reflection on such issues is sure to

²³ Skelton, op. cit., p. 319

²⁴ Levey, J., 1997, "Montserrat, The Bedevilled Jewel of the Caribbean" Appendix 1, House of Commons International Development Committee First Report, Montserrat, London: The Stationery Office, p.176

influence people's assessments of their life styles and the cultures in which these arise.

Relating in a Context of Power Imbalance

Apart from the housing issue, there were factors on both sides forcing an impasse between HMG and Montserratians. The anger and frustration that residents felt encouraged their assertiveness, and some level of aggression was directed towards DFID in particular. The Governor was also frequently targeted and even scientific advisors faced unwarranted opposition. The term "Brit-bashing" aptly describes the tirades that one heard as a matter of course. The following excerpts from an article written by a local reporter and an interview with members of the scientific community are illustrative.

A frequent domino opponent of mine sees me. He tells me the Governor says my newspaper is not printing the truth but that I should tell the Governor that he's a foreigner who will run away in a helicopter when things get bad, but as a Montserratian I have to speak the truth.²⁵

* Did you get any bashing as British persons or visitors or is that something that happens when there is no face?

Scientist 2: I did actually. I've got a bashing once, in a very personal way, there. There was [a politician] ...

Scientist 3: I've certainly been criticised from the scientific point of view, like saying one thing about the volcano and the people say no that's not the case at all...

Scientist 1: In my own case, I think I've just had a feeling that perhaps I've had to work a bit harder to develop a relationship so people can trust you. If it's going to bring me to that point I want to. I think it's about separating facts from politics again. I think in time people are, were better able to separate the science from the politics. But when in fact they were mixed up, then you were more likely to get a knocking.

Scientist 3: ... the main speaker ... was fiercely attacked, you know. And I would have said it wasn't just an attack about the science. It was a personal attack on him and which I find really quite, not right, and attending that kind of meeting, not the right kind of thing to do in that situation...

²⁵ Fenton, J., 1996, "One Day with a Volcano" in Fergus, H. ed., *Eruption*, p. 50

A transcript of the interview with the scientists is given in Appendix 4. Interview with scientists, June, 14, 2004.

Scientist 1: I think the problem all the way through is that the scientists think I've had the feeling on occasion of being set up.

Scientist 3: I think you were set up. There was a set up.

Scientist 1: Yea, in that people, nobody wants to take responsibility for evacuation, or the setting of the exclusion lines and nobody wants that responsibility, and what often happens is that when things break down, the scientists are pushed forward, pushed into the limelight, and so like headlights.

* You become the reason

Scientist 1: And that's where the stress develops with feelings against the scientists...

Scientist 1: I think it's just feeling the frustration there, where you try and kind of try make something positive, do something positive, but it continues to be presented as extremely negative, which is frustrating ...

(Interview with scientists, June 17, 2004)

As noted earlier, the housing situation in Montserrat saw gradual improvement not just because HMG changed its approach to funding, but also because, with time, locals were willing to re-appraise their attitudes to land. There was accommodation on both sides of the dispute. In the same vein, on a larger scale, building an atmosphere of trust required painstaking effort on either side of the cultural barrier, as two British scientists speaking from their experience in Montserrat attest.

Scientist 1: I've just had a feeling that perhaps I've had to work a bit harder to develop a relationship so people can trust you. If it's going to bring me to that point I want to...

Scientist 3: I would also like to agree with your point of view that it does take time to establish a relationship with people. If that's a Montserratian thing or a Caribbean thing, I don't know, but it certainly took a long time to gain peoples' trust, you know.

(June 17, 2004)

The many confrontations between British representatives and Montserratians can be viewed as power plays. Their anger and frustration pushed locals into everyday conflicts with the foreigners whom they viewed as holding positions of power. These were the Montserratians' efforts to preserve their identity, encounters in which they were really calling on the British scientists, aid managers, technicians, media workers and others to see things from their point of view. It was an urgent appeal for help, one that could have been misunderstood by its seeming irrationality in the face of western rationality. It was a call to hard work, and many reciprocated positively

giving the locals more reason to reflect positively on the events that had befallen them.

Learning from Caribbean Partners

Apart from the dialogue between HMG and the Montserrat government which can be seen as an index of north-south dialogue, Montserratians have learnt useful ways of coping by observing the Caribbean neighbours who came in to assist with reconstruction. *Caribbean connections* informed the responses of residents on Montserrat as nationals of other Caribbean countries form a significant proportion of the current population. While the peoples of the region celebrate many common bonds of history, race and culture, the Caribbean reflects a diversity of histories, ethnicities and cultures. Mutual benefits derive from the intercultural exchange between Caribbean neighbours. While immigrants arrive with the aim of securing employment and an improved standard of living, locals learn from them new techniques for survival.

This is not to suggest that Caribbean newcomers have always met a warm reception. Local prejudice against them is evident in this statement made in a youth forum.

YP: They come from Guyana and Dominica and Jamaica and all over. Everybody come and living high. Good treatment. When volcano send me to St. Kitts I couldn't live so nice.

* But remember they are our CARICOM brothers and sisters.

YP: It seems is only in Montserrat we have CARICOM brothers and sisters. When we go to other places we are volcano refugees.

(Meeting with Youth Parliament, February 09, 2004)

This type of intolerance had surfaced previously. Montserratians had displayed some inhospitable attitudes to regional partners in the wake of Hurricane Hugo, and there was some level of animosity to overcome. A visiting naturalist reflects this in her field report.

I learned that many Montserratians find iguanas abhorrent for religious reasons... the Bible states that lizards are unclean, considerable debate took place over the radio as to the significance of iguanas and how people should treat them... Some felt that the Bible was being taken out of context by these interpretations. Another popular opinion was that the Dominican and Guyanese people, who came to Montserrat after Hurricane Hugo, are responsible for teaching Montserratians how to cook and eat iguana. A great deal of resentment was evident...

[This] was not the first instance of hearing that Montserratians have ill feelings for the Dominicans, Guyanese, Haitians, and Trinidadians who were welcomed to Montserrat to assist in the rebuilding of the homes after hurricane Hugo. These new immigrants were reported as having increased human predation of iguanas."²⁶

With another influx of Caribbean persons to assist reconstruction efforts after volcanic eruptions, Montserratians were forced to find ways of accommodating them.

CH-E: ...the fact that we have been able to demonstrate a level of...love and assurance to them...we feel that if they are going to be part of the society, that they need to be part of a community of believers...

...though we are all Caribbean people, we do things differently. As a matter of fact, even in our worship style, we had to adapt to meet them, because even some songs they were accustomed to, the way they sang them, we sang them differently, and so we had to find a middle ground to make everybody comfortable, even in the worship setting.

(Interview, CH-E, March 23, 2004 cited in Ch. 5)

The situation demanded that resident Montserratians re-assess their attitudes to, and acknowledge the giftedness of those who came to help, some giving out of their own situation of need.

CL-C: The country alone don't bear the brunt of it. The other islands help us...So you feel that God's hand is really with you...We're conscious of the providence of God...When you look and you see the Guyanese...the Spanish people, you realise that others have it worse ... is not only Guyanese, but you have Jamaicans and so... you get a sense well that changes can come and you still say thank God...

(CL-C interview April 01, 2004)

In viewing Caribbean migrants as helpers rather than as competitors, people could change their attitudes to them. In acknowledging their giftedness, persons came to value them as part of the 'providence of God'. This represents a major shift in *theological thinking*, and gives one more reason why survivors could take a more positive approach to living.

Living With Other Cultures: the Migration Factor

²⁶ Caldwell, J., 1993, "People and the Green Iguana on the Island of Montserrat" Knoxville, TN:: University of Tennessee, field report. p. 8-9.

An important factor in people's changed attitudes to immigrants in the crisis was the recognition that Montserratians had long been migrating overseas for economic reasons and thereby contributing to the improved standard of living that they enjoyed. The volcanic eruptions saw a new wave of emigration. Several research participants referred to the opportunities available to those who had migrated abroad.

...all those people who have gone to England. That part I look at as a positive. Yes, we would have preferred not to have to lose so many people, but look at the number of people who have had education.... who would never have, for example, touched a computer ... So many other things; but certainly, many of those young people had the potential but certainly would not have been able to get a scholarship to go to study.

(Interview CC2, February 17, 2004)

There are quite a number of young Montserratians who otherwise would not have had the opportunity for higher education, at least not in the numbers they've had... who now have PhDs... young lawyers ... a couple who are in the field of volcanology ... quite a number of them are in England enjoying life...swearing they would not come back to Montserrat, not because of the volcano, but because of their living conditions in the UK.

(Interview, male politician #5, April 24, 2004)

With their people being accommodated elsewhere, Montserratians learned to take a new look and learn from incoming cultures. Also, the realisation that their country had long enjoyed the benefits of its citizens living and working in countries other than their own was significant. During the volcanic disaster, outward migration exceeded the intake of newcomers. Much of the new learning resulted from people residing abroad temporarily but there were also local experiences that shaped the thinking of those who stayed at home.

That persons positively changed in their attitudes to newcomers over the course of the volcanic disaster is commendable. What is regrettable is the churches' failure to participate actively in many of the hope inducing and growth promoting processes that resulted in these positive changes. The churches could have been more deliberate about their function of providing support through stimulating hope. Human resilience is encouraged through effective support mechanisms. This is implied by Synder's statement presented earlier and repeated here for emphasis.

Hope... is not a vague concept....When a concrete goal becomes imaginable, perhaps through the efforts of a counselor, this alone can unleash the person's sense of energy to pursue the goal.²⁷

In Movement 3 we consider some of the most effective supporting and resilience promoting resources to have emerged in the crisis.

3. Growth in Religious and Spiritual Faith

Persons in different forums such as focus groups, coping seminars and interviews believed that they had grown spiritually as the volcanic crisis protracted. One might question whether such is the case especially since experiences of deprivation such as loss of family, community, security, property and life threaten human thriving. In her report on research into the coping skills of Montserrat residents, Ring questioned whether their stated shift to greater reliance on God was 'based on fear and helplessness, or acceptance and surrender.'²⁸ Here we look at some of the contextual factors that inform people's changing faith positions.

Psychological Perspectives

While the perspectives presented come from the discipline of Psychology, it is useful to note that psychological development and spiritual growth are interconnected and not always clearly distinguishable from each other. Achievement of self-worth, for example, is both a spiritual and a psychological concern. This research, therefore, adopts a view that integrates emotions, affections and religious faith. It is indeed true that

there can be no spiritual healing without being in touch with the emotional, and no fullness of emotional healing without the spiritual.²⁹

Trauma theory offers a reasonable base from which to interpret certain aspects of personal development during the course of volcanic eruptions. Continuing human survival has furnished an environment for people's reframing of assumptions about the future and benevolence of the world in general. The absence of a human perpetrator initiating the disaster and the presence of social support are factors that

²⁷ Snyder, op. cit., p.357

²⁸ Ring, op. cit.

²⁹ Padovani, M., 1990, *Healing Wounded Emotions: Overcoming Life's Hurts*, Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications

reduce the tendency towards negative changes in persons' self worth.³⁰ This indicates opportunity in natural disaster for personal growth.

According to Janoff-Bulman, the experience of profound loss is psychologically 'the shattering of fundamental assumptions' about one's own self-worth and the benevolence and meaningfulness of the world. People's views of themselves and of their world change as a result of traumatic experiences. However, while survivors of war and other human-induced victimisations are more likely to hold negative assumptions about themselves and the world, survivors of natural disaster tend to have different adjustments. Confrontation with the unpredictability of nature forces them to shed previous assumptions and to see the world as potentially more frightening, but this does not influence any perception of themselves as less worthy persons.

Victimizations that do not involve perpetrators are apt to be humbling, whereas human-induced victimizations are more appropriately characterized as humiliating.³¹

If the experience of disaster does not cause persons to see themselves as less worthy, they are more likely to adjust to the demands of crisis situations. While it is true that in Montserrat people received mixed signals as some pastoral leaders alluded to their culpability for the disaster, the protraction of disaster meant that many subsequently re-evaluated their theologies, and that made for enhanced coping ability in the situation. The type of adjustment described by Janoff-Bulman is suggested in the responses of two businessmen who experienced severe losses during the volcanic eruptions.

BM2: The Lord did not have to go through what he went through on the cross. He could have eliminated it, I mean. So I think that is a lesson in itself to tell people that certain things you have to go through and you have to live. You know, I'm not vexed with the Lord, or anything of the sort, the way some people may feel that the Lord not looking after them. I don't look at it that way at all.

(Interview with Business Manager 2, April 13, 2004)

³⁰ Janoff-Bulman, op. cit., p.81-82

³¹ *ibid.*, p.80-83

* Personally you have suffered losses, material losses. How has the loss impacted you as a person?

BM1: Well we have quite a lot. We were established in Plymouth and had to leave everything. We have come over here. Fortunately we had some insurance payments. We were able to restart, not at the level that we'd been at before. But personally, like most of us, 'cause most businesses were hit, we look not on things backwards but accept that it's happened. Volcanoes are not something we can predict. We're not at that stage. Having had this, from here on, move forward and see how best we can go into the future.

* My last question. Some people see the volcano as a curse, others as a blessing in disguise. Do you have any thoughts on that?

BM1: ...Certainly not a curse. Sometimes the question arises: Why us? But certainly, I don't believe that it's a curse. We don't understand what's happening, or why is it happening, but we want to know that he's not doing it to spite us, even though we spite one another...never thought of it as a curse. I looked at it as...something on which we should reflect. I go further and say that we're a very fortunate generation that we've seen so much! I don't think there's much more that you can see. We've seen good times and we've seen the bad times. We've seen the rough times. We've seen hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, the volcano. And so we know how the island was created now we've seen nature taking place right in front of our eyes...I don't regret any, but the challenge was created and we've had to cope with it, and we've heard a lot about resilience (*laugh*), but we've been trying.³²

(Interview with Business Manager 1, March 16, 2004)

In terms of the categories identified in field data as informing one's theologising, two come into sharp focus- *hindsight helps* and *theological thinking*. From their statements, one can infer that the business managers had already engaged in theological reflection and assessed their own positions regarding the necessity of disaster. The first, through viewing this in relation to the necessity of Christ's suffering, came to believe that the experience was valuable. The second spoke of specific benefits of this learning experience. For both, the disaster brought not only questions but also new perspectives on the meaning of such experience. Their theologising and general reflection on their lived experiences served as instruments for personal faith development.

³² As in note 5, the laugh has semiotic value. The speaker is amused that he has to repeat the word that so many outsiders have used to describe Montserratians. He is guilty of violating a cultural code, repeating what is so obvious that it need not be spoken.

Given the prevailing theodicies held in pre-volcano Montserrat as elsewhere, participants' faith professions could be interpreted as 'based on fear and helplessness, or acceptance and surrender'. In Montserrat, natural disaster has been traditionally explained within a framework of divine punishment; but there also, human survival through floods and hurricanes has suggested as well a framework of divine providence. These *history hooks* inform people's faith positions. Given these realities, statements made by participants at the seminar on coping may suggest a fatalistic surrender to supernatural forces.

Further, both officially and informally in Montserrat, theological claims about the instructive value of suffering abound. Some persons may see these as support for fatalistic acceptance of disaster as a teacher. But the evidence suggests otherwise. Both business managers whose statements are recorded above viewed the crisis as a 'lesson' but are not fatalistic in their outlook. Rather, their position seems closer to this one:

God does not obliterate suffering, but uses it for good. 'All things work together for good, to those who love God.' (Rom.8.28) God shares our suffering and will bring it good from it, if we are faithful to him in love. Further, suffering can provide a time to re-assess our lives; it may compel us to re-order our priorities and hopes and give God a higher priority, and give submission to his will in all things a deeper meaning for us.³³

The statement

The Lord did not have to go through what he went through on the cross. He could have eliminated it, I mean. So I think that is a lesson in itself to tell people that certain things you have to go through and you have to live.

strongly suggests that the speaker has woven his experience of suffering and disaster into his interpretation of life's meaning. The second speaker, likewise, views the experience as having instructive value for the future. Having a mature acceptance regarding the past, he looks forwards in search of the best.

...we look not on things backwards but accept that it's happened...
Having had this, from here on, move forward and see how best we can go into the future.

³³ Campbell, A., 1987, "Theodicy" in Campbell, A., ed., *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care*, London: SPCK, p.297

From a psychological standpoint, some may still choose to interpret some of the adjustments to a person's theodicy as fatalistic because people tend to hold on their old cognitive frameworks for explaining new experiences. Some observers may, therefore, attribute the very claim of spiritual growth to people's need to maintain a sense of coherence, to feel good about their lives and the world in which they live.

Psychologically there is a potential problem with a general optimism which humans tend to feel about their environment and their own futures.

..we believe we are good people who live in a benevolent, meaningful world. These three positive assumptions co-exist at the core of our assumptive world. They are not narrow beliefs, but broad, abstract conceptions that are also emotionally potent... Our basic beliefs do not exist independent of emotions; rather, positive feelings are inextricably tied to our fundamental assumptions.³⁴

Our core assumptions are positively biased overgeneralizations. Although not always accurate, they provide us with the means for trusting ourselves and our environment.³⁵

Because what we know and what we believe affect our perception and interpretation of new information, assimilation rather than accommodation is the usual response to encountering new data. Our behaviours tend to confirm what we believe and reinforce our conceptual systems even when evidence is presented to the contrary.³⁶ But the data suggests that many residents altered their beliefs in the face of new evidence. When one explores how persons changed their attitudes to the expression of fear, how they critiques old theologies and adopted more helpful ways of finding meaning in their situation, it becomes clearer that the development of a more holistic faith was a positive outcome for many.

The subsequent discussion section entitled "Critical theological reflection on Disaster" illustrates persons' changing theological definition of the situation. *Theological thinking* has contributed in large measure to their growth in Christian faith. It is useful here to trace a change in outlook from fatalism to a more mature approach to faith in God.

³⁴ Janoff-Bulman, op. cit., p.12

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.25

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.34-6.

A Fatalistic Outlook

For many, the onset of volcanic eruptions provoked a crisis of faith and they tried to interpret volcanic phenomena from a theological standpoint. People were afraid, and given the tendency among preachers and pastors to sponsor notions of divine punishment for human error, many were greatly distressed. In a few cases pastors encouraged persons in their congregations to leave the island because they interpreted the disaster as divine punishment. There were many who felt that they would be doomed whether or not they evacuated their homes or the island and so their fatalistic judgements resulted in inaction. The case of Franscico and Mariella Simpson in Chapter Three is illustrative.³⁷ There were also others who did not relocate because they expected divine protection from the disastrous effects of the eruptions wherever they happened to be.

Early Attitudes to Fear

Among the church leaders who remained on the island, some did little to allay people's fears concerning the punishment to be inflicted on the unfaithful. Suggestions that fearful persons were culpable added to their burden of stress. Many chose to hide their true feelings. The following portion of an SXP2 conversation speaks to the situation then.

* I recall that as a preacher, a pastor, one of the biggest challenges for me when that thing started was to assure people that it was alright to be afraid since it's a perfectly normal reaction. They'd be frightened and go to somebody else who says if you have any faith you wouldn't be frightened, so they were trembling, stressed out. They can't tell anybody else that they're frightened because

YW: They wonder what will they think of me.

* Yes. I wasn't really terrified then but there are things that frightened me.

YN: Frightening things about the whole situation.

YT: Like I said, in the beginning, I wasn't afraid yet...there were uncomfortable moments.

YW: Of course.

YT: But fear never really took me over... I wasn't scared but I was distressed, stressed out about where am I going to go? How am I going to move? What are we going to do?

³⁷ See also note 42, Chapter One and note 48 below

YN: I was going to say then again some of the fear was tingled with excitement as well.

* Yes. That's another theme.

YN: Aha. hmm hmm. There's so many exciting things about the whole situation.

YS: People were afraid, and people ran; some people ran away, some people panicked, some people didn't; some people were afraid but afraid to say they were afraid.

YW: That's right.

* Because some people reacted by saying if you were afraid is because you had no faith.

Group: Right.

* So what do we know? There were persons who were afraid and persons who were not afraid, and some who were not afraid and helped others to cope with it. There were those who

XW: Who were burdening others with their own fear by preventing them from expressing their true feelings.

* So, that's what the reality was at that time.

(SXP2, February 18, 2004)

In such a setting, it was difficult to help people accept that their fears constituted predictable, explainable and acceptable responses to the potentially disastrous phenomena they were witnessing. As one participant noted, there were those who, in denying their real feelings oppressed themselves and others.

It is quite natural for persons to be afraid in horrifying situations such as the Montserrat volcanic eruptions. For this event, anxiety and fear would have been predictable. It would have been far more useful for Christian leaders to facilitate people's emotive expression rather than stimulate guilt feelings through which burdens were transferred from one person to another. While it is true that only some leaders, lay and ordained, added to this source of confusion, their attitude only served to delay and possibly to prevent healing for many persons.

The Decline of the Fear Factor

At the same time, it should be noted that fear was sometimes suppressed, not intentionally, but by other emotions that surfaced as the experience of living with the volcano taught unforeseeable lessons. As one SXP2 participant put it, 'some of the fear was tingled with excitement as well'. For example, adults and children alike came to appreciate some aspects of the experience as a lesson in nature. The songs

Little Island, Live Volcano and *Glowing* describe the erupting volcano as something animating and communicate some of the excitement felt in learning.³⁸

Below, an interviewee refers to the eruptions as ‘a miracle’. Her statement reveals a positive outlook. By describing the volcano as such, she places it within divine creative activity which she is thankful to witness.

While we were growing up, you hear they that said the volcano is a hole in the earth which brings out ashes and lava, but really I didn’t expect that I would have lived to see such miracle!

(Interview, Senior Citizen 1, February 18, 2004)

While certain comments did not include explicitly religious or theological language, the speakers’ words tell of their gratitude for the experience of witnessing volcanic phenomena. They valued the geoscience lessons associated with these and their attitudinal posture was, in effect, an antidote that ‘cast out fear’.

In her foreword to the St. Augustine’s School publication of its children’s reflections on the volcano, the school principal writes

While one cannot ignore the danger which this volcano brings to the lives of the people of the island, one has also had great opportunity to see the work of nature at its best.

Daylight giving way to midnight darkness in seconds, mountain ranges being transformed on a daily basis, columns of ash and gases being thrown thousands of feet into the atmosphere, as well as the night sky being lit by a mountain “on fire”, are some examples of this...³⁹

The same opinion is expressed here by someone for whom the motivation of learning far outweighed negative feelings about the related inconvenience of ashfalls.

* ...you still live at home, but you didn’t always live there. You had to move

CoL-2: Well I was out for about 15 months...when the OK was given to come back...there was a great ashfall soon after. I didn’t realise I wasn’t the only person thinking that way. I did in fact move in several months afterwards, about 15 months instead of the 12 which was official. When I did go back in and I asked my neighbours how they were doing, they say well they were to come back since 2/3 months ago, but the ashfall just kept them out a little longer; and the same thing happened to me...

³⁸ See App. 1.10.

³⁹ Edwards, E., 1997, in “Foreword” to *The Voices of Our Children. Soufrière Hills Volcano Montserrat*, Woodlands, Montserrat: St. Augustine School

* So the ashfalls, they were a deterrent. Can you speak a bit about that?

CoL-2: Well yea, I mean especially this last one that we had July 12th. When that one came

* That was 2003?

CoL-2: 2003. I mean there was no living around there. I simply had to just pack up a few things and get out of there, because it was...like 11 inches of ash in some parts of the property...ash went into the downstairs and filled it up 6 and a half inches.

* Inside?

CoL-2: Inside, in the garage ... it was just virtually impossible to live there. In fact I couldn't open the gate. We had to use a pick-axe and dug a little so that we can get the gate squeezed enough for me to just pass through. But we had to get bobcart, mechanical equipment to dig up the ash because it was very heavy like concrete.

* ...Was it frightening?

CoL-2: For me, not really. As an individual I don't get frightened easily. And beyond that, I have a sort of interest in the whole thing which many people don't...because of my background training in Geography, in fact I'm happy to see the thing. I'm not saying I want them to happen so I could see the thing. But once they happen, I want to see them. I want to understand the phenomena because this is something which I learned by the book, and I'm now seeing it in real living colours.
(Interview CoL2, April 22, 2004)

As the population adjusted to living near an active volcano, the element of fear lessened. For some persons, the excitement factor would have played a part. Also, this might have been partly due to the development of trauma fatigue which could have resulted from several factors such as increasing familiarity with volcanic phenomena.

Montserrations have become so used to the volcano's huffing and puffing that the initial terror has gone. As one woman said, "at first when there was an ashfall, everybody run. Now when the ash falls, everybody look."⁴⁰

It could likewise have resulted from increased awareness following on education programmes which, it is claimed, 'helped to boost public confidence, and to desensitize some of the more sensitive aspects of this situation.'⁴¹

⁴⁰ Williams, A., op. cit., p. 66

⁴¹ Buffonge, C., *Volcano*, p.18

The decline in the fear factor can be also explained in part by the increasing emigration as the eruptions protracted. In 1994, a population of 10,402 was recorded, and the figure for 1995 was 10,324. By 1996 it had fallen to 7,867, then to 6,075 in 1997. The most difficult period was mid 1997 to 1998 when further evacuations in the wake of the fatal eruptions squeezed the entire population into the northern third of the island. The population estimate for 1998 was 2,726 representing a 74% decline from the pre-volcano level.⁴² It seems reasonable to assume that the majority of those who were mortally afraid of the volcano would have left, given HMG's financial provisions for off-island relocation of residents choosing this option.

The development of more helpful responses to fear has been cited as one aspect of spiritual maturity. Subsequent movements in this theological reflection will explore further the matter of growth in religious / spiritual faith.

4. Critical Theological Reflection on Disaster

In the aftermath of traumatic events, people continue to rely on their fundamental assumptions to help them organize their experiences into a coherent picture of the changing world. Human beings have a 'conservative impulse' and generally keep their already organized 'structures of meaning' as a way of surviving and to adapting to changing conditions. They need to learn or to adapt their 'structures of meaning' to accommodate new events. Alternatively, they ignore or prevent experiences which these 'structures of meaning' cannot account for.⁴³

It follows, then, that among persons for whom participatory religion is a significant factor, traumatic experiences will be interpreted and assimilated within a religious faith perspective. For sure, pastoral conversation was characterized by an abundance of God-talk on the part of careseekers in Montserrat.⁴⁴ One may question whether Montserratians' verbal professions of faith are simply the result of cognitive conservatism or whether these represent their reviewed and renewed claims about

⁴² 2004 Calendar, Department of Statistics, Government of Montserrat

⁴³ Marris, P. 1975, *Loss and Change*, Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor/ Doubleday, p. 19-20.

Janoff-Bulman, op. cit., p.19-20

⁴⁴ See Barnes, 2001, "Affirming God's Sovereignty in Coping with Natural Disaster: A Montserrat Experience" unpublished paper, p.2.

- 2000, "The Montserrat Volcanic Disaster, op. cit.

God, their relationship with God, and the meaning of life. The following excerpt from an SXP1 focus group reflection is informative.

* Last week we said we would come back today to this point that XL raised ‘that volcano there come for a reason.’ Any comments?

XK: ...I just thought that there’s a reason for everything under the sun. So it must come for a reason, but as to what that reason is, I can’t enunciate on that.

* You sure there’s a reason for everything?

XK: Well ah nuh me write de book. De book say, it say there’s a reason for everything under the sun.

Group laughs.

XL: A which book dat? Oh! Ecclesiastes.

XK: De book say a time for dis and a time for dat. There’s a time fuh volcano to erupt and a time fuh ee stop erupt when ee ready.

(SXP1, March 01, 2004)

In present praxis, the Bible is accepted as presenting God’s truth.

Well ah nuh me write de book...

‘De book’ here is a reference to the bible. ‘De book say’ can be taken as a statement concerning biblical authority. ‘Ah nuh me write...’ looks beyond human agency to belief in divine inspiration which prompts its readers to accept its truth claims and is therefore, suggestive of continuing faith in God. The statement ‘I just thought...’ is contingent upon acceptance of the truth claims of the bible which are authenticated within the framework of a people’s historicity.

De book say...There’s a time fuh volcano to erupt and a time fuh ee stop erupt when ee ready.

The group conversation continues.

XE: Only that we don’t know that time.

XK: We don’t know the time, but unlike most of your prophets of doom who believe that is because we bad, and a feeling over the years you find people who, evangelist and so coming in, and they always seem to be saying this sort of because we must be really worse dan anybody else. I really don’t subscribe to that particular, that line of thought.

XT: And you call them evangelists. What’s evangelist?

XK: Well that’s what they call themselves.

* But if we remember the meaning of evangelism, it’s about good news, right?

XK: Well yes, but dem a nuh bring no good news!

The suggestion is rejected that the islanders are more deserving of divine punishment than anyone else. A speaker is critical of those who 'call themselves' evangelists but 'bring no good news'.

XT: They were saying some island beginning with 'A' is going to sink and they were convinced is Alliouagana.⁴⁵

XE: Alliouagana? All of a sudden.

Group laughs.

XL: But mi never mi hear dat piece.

XK: Yes, all of a sudden is Alliouagana. They say one of the Caribbean islands say one of the islands was supposed to sink.

* I heard that but...

XW: I remember them talking bout that. J call me from America one time and tell me what he hear, that one of the Caribbean going to sink and it will be Montserrat.

* Oh, so is in America they made the prophecy.

XK: Right here mi hear.

XT: They came from America. I don't think the person they came here.

XK: No they didn't come here, but is some kind of prediction that they had, and after the volcano they decide is, at the same time Kick Up Jenny had been erupting on this side, so I don't know why, because at the same time they made that prediction that area had also been acting up. But I don't know why they thought it was us.⁴⁶

XW: Is after the volcano start they start with this talk

There are stated suspicions regarding the timing of the prophecy. Clearly, they do not believe the "prophecy." 'Is after the volcano start they start with this talk'. Research participants exercise reason in deciding to ignore certain theological arguments presented to explain the eruptions.

XK: But what I don't know is whether or not... There's a reason. Is what that reason is.

* So you don't find any reason yet?

XK: Not over and above anything else.

XT: I myself, I thought we were too bad, and then when I went to Nevis I find...worse. I just figure that we were just the worst... doing

⁴⁵ *Alliouagana* is an Amerindian name for the island later called Montserrat

⁴⁶ *Kick 'up Jenny* is a submarine volcano off the coast of Grenada

something that was displeasing in the sight of the Lord. Well I know that some of us

* How bad they are, Nevisians, why you say they worse?

XT: They don't respect the Lord's Day like we do. And just the way that they behave, certain things that they do.

XK: Well you just have to take the ferry across to Antigua. If you think that we bad, just go across the water and you find out how bad we is!

* Tell me

XK: Out there defines badness. Corruption, you have the prostitution, everything that we seem to be just getting

XE: I mean you have everything, all the vice.

XK: Everything we seem to be just getting, it's there in abundance. So why then we would be singled out?

(SXP1, March 01, 2004)

Rather than provide confirmation for suspicion that the use of religious language here is a mere extension of pre-volcano practice, the conversation strongly suggests a rejection of fatalism on the part of those involved. At first reading this may be construed as psychological and social refusal to let go of their fundamental assumption about the goodness of nature. Theologically, in some circles, it may still be understood as fatalistic and interpreted as a reluctance to step out of the providential framework. But when one considers the rational grounds given for the group's rejection of the prediction given by person(s) claiming to be prophet(s), this suggestion is highly debatable. Common sense judgement is mixed with the usual suspicion of a position which originates in the North Atlantic.

No they didn't come here, but is some kind of prediction that they had, and after the volcano they decide is...I don't know why they though it was us.

The prediction is dismissed as ludicrous, especially given the presence of an active submarine volcano in the Eastern Caribbean. Then note the treatment of 'an island beginning with 'A'. Why Alliouagana, a name not in use? Why not some other Caribbean island whose name begins with 'A'? There are others. In the same vein, a theology of a punitive God is rejected on the basis of reason. If punishment were to be meted out on the deserving, Montserrat would not be the only recipient: 'Why then we would be singled out?'

It is not unusual to find that persons' self evaluation involves comparison with others. All reasoning here is done in the context of comparison with others. In

reflections, group narratives are situated within a broad world of experience. Here, the narrower context of the Eastern Caribbean – Nevis, Antigua, Grenada – (*Caribbean Connections*) comes into sharp focus, but it is discussion on a prediction originating in America. Note too, the frame of explanation is a strictly moral one. Statements are intended to show the higher level of morality among Montserratians. They are better by comparison with others and so to deserve the volcano is unlikely. Hence they do not internalise guilt.

The religious faith that survives the volcanic eruptions cannot be categorised indisputably as a fatalistic acceptance, not in the same sense as clear statements made during the early phases of the eruptions.

There is clear evidence of earlier fatalism as illustrated in statements below.

Scientist 1: The other thing that I was gonna bring up to you, is a bit of fatalism. I'm getting back to June 25th 97 again. And I know lots of people, there were people living within the exclusion zone, and many of us went in and had tried to persuade them, and the reasons that they gave were varied but there were a few persons who said that God will protect me. That's a difficult one to deal with.

* There were relatively few of those who said God would protect them. There were those who said well let God do what he's doing.

(Interview with scientists, June 17, 2004)

These observations are supported by the statements of residents.

...just let we trust God and God will take us through.

When we see it, it look nice and I say to mi grand daughter ... "I have the belief if God was goin to do us anything since this occur, he would do something more than that. So let us keep praying and call upon God",

For his mercy e'er endure

Ever faithful ever sure.⁴⁷

God who made the world, he promise never to take up the world by way of water again, it's fire and I am prepared for what happens. I will be satisfied with it. I can do nothing, for God is the boss and what he do, we could do nothing different but be satisfied. So up to now I'm feeling alright.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Fergus, H., 1996, "People Talk Their Mind", p. 41, in Fergus, H. ed., *Eruption: Montserrat Versus Volcano*, Plymouth, Montserrat: UWI School of Continuing Studies

⁴⁸ Fergus, "People Talk Their Mind", op. cit., p. 40

If the faith professions of surviving residents ten years later are not to be dismissed as fatalistic acceptance, it would be useful to cite a wider range of theological reflection on the matter. Also it would be helpful to indicate other signs of personal development to support the view that the crisis resulted in positive personal changes at individual and group levels. These tasks will be pursued further as we go into Movement 3.

Movement 3: Accessing Christian Story/Vision

The Montserrat volcanic disaster, notwithstanding its life denying aspects, presented opportunities for the development of human potential and for demonstration of resolve by persons who worked together to transcend difficulties. As we have seen, many responded positively in a burst of creativity. Through the practical creative outlets they employed, we can find both tacit and explicit expressions that are instructive for pastoral efforts at nurturing hope and promoting human resilience and transcendence.

We need to look to the creative expressions of those who flourished in disaster and identify resources to enhance Christian praxis of faith. There are two valid reasons for affirming these as indices of faith. Firstly, to look at the history of survivors for resources that qualify as Christian is to take *shared Christian praxis* seriously as a way of doing theology and ministry. This approach appropriates theological meaning from current history as it accepts that divine revelation continues. After all,

To be Christian means for us to see ourselves, the world about us, and human responses within the interpretive vision provided by the metaphors and themes of the Christian story.⁴⁹

Here, the understanding of *Christian Story/Vision* is not static. Movement Three considers valuable contributions of Montserrat which have not been officially categorised as Christian, but which have assisted Christian persons in their search for transcendence, thereby showing promise as effective means for Christian pastoral care in disaster. This development is also consistent with the womanist commitment to facilitating the expression of marginalised voices in the research context.

⁴⁹ Gerkin,, *Widening the Horizons*, p.37

Secondly, this research constitutes a practical response to the problem of evil. Given the particularities of a historical situation, it seeks to answer spiritual and ethical concerns regarding what action ought to be taken and how. It represents

a quest for sense that takes the form of how one is to continue to live in the face of insuperable suffering and death.⁵⁰

It is worth noting that:

The successful solution to the problem of evil as a practical issue will look very different from the successful solution to the problem considered abstractly in theodicies. Given that the latter is looking for the logical coherence in the assertion of a set of propositions, the solution is evidently a certain demonstrable logicity. In the case of the former, the aim must be (1) to understand how, and to will, to diminish or defeat evil; where this is impossible, (2) to know how one is to live in the face of evil; and (3) to find consolation.⁵¹

Movement Three therefore explores what is practicable in the light of actual human experience. Practical successes take precedence over seemingly logical explanations that have not proven useful for persons coping with the Montserrat volcanic disaster. As aspects of present praxis are considered, resources are highlighted that stimulated, encouraged or communicated Christian faith and offered consolation to those living in the face of evil and suffering; and these are recommended as potential contributors to renewing the praxis of Christian pastoral care.

1. Development of Culturally Consonant Modes of Care

Among the indigenous resources that surfaced during the Montserrat volcanic disaster, some of the songs and dramatic productions were valuable for encouraging resilience. In order to understand their potential as instruments for the delivery of contextually relevant pastoral care, a discussion on the dynamics of resilience is useful. It will show that cultural features and other elements which facilitate the communication of hope are powerful instruments to be employed in situations of deprivation and loss.

⁵⁰ Felderhof, op. cit., p. 398

⁵¹ idem

Resilience and Hope

From a strict theological perspective, resilience, or the drive of the human spirit to survive, points to unlimited divine grace accessible to human beings who achieve what seems to be impossible. But how can pastoral care encourage the processes that result in resilience? How can it encourage suffering persons to claim available grace for the transformation of their seemingly hopeless situations?

Monteleone uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine the concept of resiliency which he describes as an interactive process involving *vision*, *genius*, and *commitment* all working in a circle of support. For him, vision implies a risk taking willingness to hope, to believe in something that though unseen, may unfold gradually over time. Genius speaks of a more internalised confidence that furnishes endurance as persons anticipate their special destiny, while commitment refers to

a focussed exertion of energy that enables us to plan, structure and follow through to a place where hope is witnessed and genius finds its home.⁵²

The dynamics of vision, genius, and commitment as defined here correspond to the Christian virtue of hope. The confidence to believe in what is yet to be unfolded has an eschatological quality. It relates to what Moltmann calls our 'eschatological identity'; while genius connotes a sort of faith in one's divine purpose to be fulfilled. Moltmann speaks of 'historical embeddedness', that sense of connectedness to a larger narrative, a web of meaning that transcends the immediate situation with its restrictive pressures.

Sustaining hope is important since it represents 'the first ingredient of resilience'.⁵³ As stated earlier, pastors are essentially agents of hope. It is essential however, that expectations related to this role be clarified since no "how-to" manual exists to guide pastors in this regard. Hoping involves an unexplainable and subjective element.⁵⁴ This often leads to disagreement among individuals and loneliness on the part of those who hope.⁵⁵ Solitariness notwithstanding, hoping is indicative of human desire which is one facet of the divine image in humankind.

⁵² Monteleone, R. 1998, "Vision, Genius and Commitment: An Essay on Resiliency", *The Journal of Pastoral Counseling: An Annual. Dynamics of Resilience*, 33, 93-109, p. 93-94

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 97

⁵⁴ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, p.55

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p 57-8

...to the extent that hoping is also an expression of desire, there is a deep investment of our God-given self in the human disposition to hope. When we hope, it is our true self that comes to expression, that manifests itself.

...when we hope, we not only anticipate that the object of our desire will come about, but we also marshal our own energies and resources to make it so.⁵⁶

Hope, then, involves a combination of internal faith decision making with the strong desire for and expectation of a particular external event. The investment of desire correlates with an allocation of one's personal resources to help the realisation of dreams. But, as Monteleone observes, only those who feel supported can have the hope of resilience to sustain them in adversity.⁵⁷

The role of support has been explored in the clinical sciences. From a psychological perspective, there are two necessary components of goal-directed thought and behaviour. These are cognitive willpower which corresponds to the energy needed for movement towards the goal, and the perceived ability to get there. Counselling can help to boost one's hope processes through recognition of a person's cognitive willpower. A supporting pastoral presence also encourages one's perceived abilities to recognize routes to get to one's goal.⁵⁸ Hope, then, gets a boost when a person feels supported.

The value of social support existing before traumatic conditions has also been documented. This type of reassurance primarily serves to help people feel better about themselves when things are not going well.⁵⁹ It has been shown that where persons are emotionally shaken and not yet ready to receive informational support, some form of emotional support helps them to surmount challenges of the present.⁶⁰ The presence of social support has also been recognised as a factor that acts to prevent or to diminish the severity of symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which frequently appear in persons exposed to trauma.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, p.59-60

⁵⁷ Monteleone, op. cit., p.99

⁵⁸ Snyder, op. cit., p.355,358

⁵⁹ Harlow, R., Cantor, N., 1995, "Social Support", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 2, 329-40, p.329

⁶⁰ Schaefer, C., et. al., op. cit., p. 383

⁶¹ Foy, D., et.al., 1993, "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder", in Wicks, J. & Parsons, R. ,eds., *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling, Vol.2*, N.Y.: Paulist Press, p. 625

Theologically, the required external support working in tandem with inner strengths to fuel hope speaks of divine grace available in varied forms. The place of pastoral caregivers acting in response to divine love is an important element within the framework of support. Pastoral intervention affords a supporting presence, which, through representing God's presence, becomes stabilizing and sustaining, symbolising comfort and hope. This point made by Nouwen has been noted. He calls the pastor to be a "living reminder" of divine presence.⁶² In this way the pastoral caregiver may encourage persons in crisis to interpret their experiences and place these in the context of their own faith pilgrimage.⁶³

One's soul journey through harsh circumstances may involve the development of the capacity to sustain self and others. It is out of their experience of hurt and vulnerability that "wounded healers" serve. This observation is valid for disaster survivors who move from the role of victims to that of support providers.

Sometimes resiliency is not something that we choose. We may become resilient or need to display resiliency in response to a traumatic event or situation that occurs. So, it may be true that we learn and develop resiliency in the face of adversity and overwhelming circumstances.⁶⁴

The suggestion here is that potentially harmful situations may well prove, paradoxically, to catalyse the human spirit of resilience. This is understandable if, as has been suggested, hope is fundamental to the process. Hoping happens in response to perception that our needs are lacking and we experience a strong sense of wanting and needing.⁶⁵ The experience of loss often results in persons having a profound sense of being deprived.⁶⁶ A range of deprivations resulting from the Montserrat volcanic disaster were documented in Chapter One. The dislocation and loss which characterised the situation, then, also gave rise to a situation in which persons needed to envision a better future in order to survive the present.

⁶² Nouwen, *Living Reminder*, 30-2

⁶³ Hunter, R., 1990, "Trauma", in Hunter, R. ed., 1990, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Nashville: Abingdon, p. 1287

⁶⁴ Monteleone, op. cit., p. 105

⁶⁵ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, p.60

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.61

The preceding section on the dynamics of resilience and the related significance of hope should help to clarify the usefulness of art forms as vehicles for encouraging hope and thereby promoting resilience. From the wide range of the musical compositions were produced, one song is used to illustrate within it the elements of vision, genius and commitment which are essential for inspiring hope.⁶⁷ Assuming that the singer's words reflect his intuitions, and bearing in mind that a calypsonian usually speaks to and for a community, one can discern features for promoting resilience in "Cupid's" *The Crisis We Face*.⁶⁸

The opening stanza introduces the vision which takes the risk of hoping towards a better future, a time beyond the 'worst crisis.'

We are a people faced with the worst crisis in our history
Over us hangs this cloud of uncertainty
But deep within I do believe we will survive
Out of all this hurt there must be some good that can be derived

Here the singer calls the listeners to acknowledge the gravity of the present crisis, but he also shares his conviction that there is value to be gained from the painful experience. His is a summons to envision a better future. This pointer to an alternate reality comes in the context of the undesirable yet real present. The artist shares the sense of deprivation felt by his hearers and is qualified to make an appeal that encourages them towards a more desirable reality. As hope, this is risky because

hopes...are projections [that] envision a future that is technically false and unreal, as it does not exist, and as yet is profoundly true and real, as it expresses yearnings and longings that not only exist but are often more real than the objective world.⁶⁹

But the risk is absolutely essential if persons are to conquer fatalistic inaction and move beyond the present.

The song makes explicit an element of genius that gives staying power.

And although we sometimes wonder why
We dare not hang our heads and die

⁶⁷ Monteleone, op. cit., 97-9

⁶⁸ Francis, H., 1995, "The Crisis We Face", in *Take De Road*, Olveston, Montserrat: H. Francis

⁶⁹ Capps, *Agents of Hope*, p.66

This situation is just a chance to prove our resilience.

Is the crisis we face that go make us stronger

This is an emphatic statement of human resolve to seize whatever opportunity the moment affords. A definite choice is to be made - 'to hang [their] heads and die' or to 'prove [their] resilience.' This communal call expressed in the first person plural reminds the individual that s/he is part of a larger community called to rally together. Their collective strength and support can provide persons with the endurance needed to survive crisis conditions. This collaboration furnishes the genius to believe that since they were created for better conditions they should see themselves through to these. The current crisis is to be viewed as something 'that go make us stronger.'

The expression of commitment to follow through is clear.

The seriousness of the time go help to bring us together

In our common nature and help us remember

That we are one people

In joy or in trouble- yea,

We have too much at stake to just sit down here and grumble.

The song encourages commitment to the vision by giving focus to the people as to where they should concentrate their energies. These should not be wasted on grumbling and complaining, behaviours that are likely in such depressing conditions. Rather, persons should recognise that these behaviours only rob humans of their capacity to move forward. Instead of allowing people's thoughts to wander into unproductive areas, the singer harnesses their intellectual and spiritual energies by emphasising their common humanity and their need to work for the common survival.

It should be noted that the theological theme of a common humanity is emphasised through the use of "non-theological language". The art form of calypso, as the name suggests, presents a cryptic message using language that portrays a more obvious meaning.⁷⁰ This artistic feature is effective in stimulating theological reflection where an overtly religious emphasis may not help.

⁷⁰ In the interview transcript (Appendix 5A) A1 refers to "the literal, obvious meaning" in contradistinction to "the second [meaning]." This is one characteristic of the art form. cf. Greek *kalupto*

One can identify similar motivational potential in *Have a Little Faith*. This song mentions ‘the Lord’ who will bless those oppressed by insurance companies. While this reference can be taken as an unambiguous statement of religious faith, the accompanying rhythm is described as *bena*.⁷¹ So, while the tempo suggests the song as having entertainment value, the lyrics direct the participants in song and dance to reflect on divine grace. This is by no means accidental. In an interview, the singer stated explicitly his intention to use the song to stimulate hope.⁷²

Using Humour and Laughter as Coping Resources

Humour and laughter, if used appropriately, can be valuable pastoral tools for caring among persons whose circumstances seem anything but laughable. In this regard, one needs to take seriously the community drama productions that arose in the context of the Montserrat volcanic crisis. In 1996, a group of amateur dramatists led by Yvonne Weekes staged *God Will Find a Way*.⁷³ This production bore the name of its theme song, a calypso. To an outsider, the very title *God Will Find a Way* could sound fatalistic. For one thing, the sung response to every conundrum surfacing in the crisis was ‘but I know that God will find a way.’ In reality, the production was essentially an effort to lighten the aura of tension surrounding everyone. Moving from shelter to shelter, and eventually to relocated residents abroad, it was an exercise in good humour designed to help people to find amusement at a time when it seemed impossible to laugh at themselves. It encouraged persons to listen to themselves and to others and helped prepare them for more serious stresses to follow. In later years the chorale group *Voices* re-worked songs like *Good Morning* in an effort to increase people’s awareness of the real tensions that were present among them. The theatre group *Plenty-Plenty Yac-Ya-Ya* used its stage performances *Ash* and *Ash: the Second Falling* with similar effect. The aim was to present laughter as a resource for coping with natural phenomena associated with a supernatural power. Music, song and drama proved effective vehicles for de-traumatising persons. From a theological perspective, these productions seemed to present a good sense of humour as one element of grace for survival.

⁷¹ *bena* roughly equivalent to “secular”

⁷² A transcript of the interview is given in Appendix 5B. A5, April 13, 2004.

⁷³ Weekes, Y., 1996, *God Will Find a Way*, Montserrat: Department of Culture

Where humour and laughter have proven valuable in helping persons to transcend their present misery, there God must also be. Through grace, persons can be helped to view their experiences in a different light and so find help for coping. In essence, *God Will Find a Way* used techniques of reframing situations, a method recommended by pastoral psychologist Donald Capps. He suggests that where helpful, pastors can help persons to reframe, that is,

to change the conceptual and/or emotional setting or viewpoint in relation to which a situation is experienced and to place it in another frame which fits the 'facts' of the same concrete situation equally well or even better, and thereby change is its entire meaning.⁷⁴

Residents found it easier to reframe many of their experiences when they were able to laugh at themselves and to believe that *God* [would] *find a way* [out]. In many cases, a simple way was suggested, but one that their burdened minds had not thought about. Seeing current difficulties in a different light was a way of lightening the problems and sometimes presenting them as blessings with value to be realised.

The gifts of humour and laughter have been undervalued in Christian pastoral care. In making this observation, Pattison presents a commentary on Rabbi Lionel Blue's hilarious radio broadcasts.

With the laughter comes an authentic experience of pastoral care which makes present life bearable and new life possible. Why should this be so?

The reason lies behind the fact that Jewish humour arises from the profound suffering of the Jewish people over many centuries. Unhappy people listening to Blue's talks instinctively sense that the humour in them does not circumvent or minimize misery, but embraces it.⁷⁵

Humour and laughter, then, can help to make the seemingly unbearable life easier to cope with. There are several other techniques of reframing that may be used with similar effect. In each case, the idea is to stimulate persons' hoping and coping processes through enabling them to perceive an alternate reality towards which they can move.

⁷⁴ Capps, D., 1990, *Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care*, Fortress Press: Minneapolis, p. 17

⁷⁵ Pattison, *Critique*, p.173

Focusing on the Emotive and Affective

It is neither necessary nor even possible to present the range of songs and dramatic productions which were instrumental in the coping processes of residents, which, if viewed as elements of a gracious framework of support, can be seen as suggesting divine presence. In view of its great contribution, *Little Island, Live Volcano* should not be overlooked. This collection of songs organized into a chronological record of experiences during the eruptions was supplemented with a text for children. Apart from its obvious value as an educational tool for children locally, regionally and globally, *Little Island Live Volcano* became part of the community's coping strategy. The song *Shovelling* was particularly helpful.⁷⁶

Montserratian psychologist Carol Tuitt who worked along with Randall Greenaway in producing the package *Little Island Live Volcano* speaks in this interview.

* ...you did some work with Zunky, *Little Island, Live Volcano*.

CT: ... it was two-fold...for both of us our way of coping, and dealing with ... making some sense out of all that had happened. Well for me it was writing a commentary, creating your music, writing and putting lyrics into it and so on.

* Yea.

CT: ... it was a chance to deal with and just put in some kind of order, all the stuff that was just going on around, to give me a chance to focus on the reality of what had happened really... because from day one, you really had no time to deal with it. You had to deal with everybody.

* As a professional you were very much in demand.

CT: Right. I think that time to sit and write gave me a little chance to remember, to put in some sort of order, whether it was an evacuation order, or when the mountain was glowing....

Now for the kids, what I found for many of them, it was an opportunity to not focus so much on the negative part of what had happened, in other words to ... make light of some of the events and to give an opportunity to them all to sit back and look... to help them to go beyond the sad part of it, to help them to be able to dance to *Shovelling* with ash all about and so on. So you don't see shovelling ash as just the terrible thing that it was. You know it's hard, back breaking work, but when they could sit down and make the steps to *Shovelling*...

* So technically, you were actually finding resources in the difficult situation to make it light?

⁷⁶ Greenaway, R, 1998, "Shovelling" in *Little Island live Volcano*. See App.1.11.

CT: Yea. Because even now, *Shovelling*, as soon as they sing, they have to do their steps.

* I suppose now it comes naturally, not just for the children but even for adults.

CT: Yes, right.

(Interview, February 17, 2004)

Shovelling promoted catharsis through simultaneous stimulation of therapeutic bodily actions and positive emotions along with evocation of the memory of adversity. This effective combination was encouraged by the words and music of the song from its opening line.

When a crisis challenges a nation, men will rise to the situation.

By reminding people of their potential, these words can tap into the genius that makes for survival.

Men on rooftops galvanize or shingle
Answering nature with the hoe and the shovel
No complaining though out in the hot sun
Just concentrating on getting the job done

The song realistically pits human response against a powerful natural phenomenon by admitting that ‘ash is heavy load’. And this realization coincides with the actual motions involved in the hard work that is demanded. The important difference between shovelling volcanic ash before and after the production of *Shovelling* is that in the latter case, the hearer and singer (for most persons will sing along) have on offer a means of defusing the gruelling nature of the task. The words are meant to remind persons that they possess the commitment required to see them through the present difficulty.

Shovelling effectively reclaimed the potency of work songs of an earlier era. But while earlier work songs associated with the *maroon* did not mention the task to be completed, this newer genre uses no avoidance strategies. It faces the harsh reality and helps the sufferer to stare hard work in the face with a view to claiming transcendence in the moment. In stimulating persons through simultaneous appeal to the cognitive, emotive and affective dimensions of the human psyche, the music, song and dance proved therapeutic. Feelings were released which gave a sense of victory so many needed to see them through difficulty. From a theological standpoint, it brought the message of Resurrection alive. This shows one way in which Christian pastoral care can respond to the call for an anthropology that is more

consistent with the doctrines of creation, and value a wide range of human expression as proved useful for the Montserrat situation.

2. Advancement in Intercultural Learning

Through the exchanges between cultures in Montserrat during the volcanic eruptions, persons came to understand each other better. Many of the intercultural encounters were, unfortunately, harsh ones where residents released some anger they had long suppressed. Issuing from these incidents, however, were personal reflections and further avenues for co-operation that helped people's understandings of themselves and their relationships with those who were different. In that context, fundamental Christian teachings regarding a common humanity became meaningful.

We have noted how the thorny issue of land acquisition and possession was dealt with, paving the way for the necessary housing construction. One decade after the start of the eruptions, the material culture of Montserrat is richer. For example, post-volcano housing styles have been influenced by contributions from Japanese architecture; and the layout of English suburban estates is obvious in new residential areas in much the same way as the construction industry had been previously reflective of American styles. The bulk of construction labour has been provided by other Caribbean nationals who have brought with them skills and ideas that are now integrated into the local culture.

Much of the learning exchanged between Montserrat and the outside world happened as a matter of course. Local and overseas scientific, management, health, construction, disaster recovery and other personnel worked alongside each other and learned from one another. It is obvious that programmes which facilitate people's working together create opportunities for positive intercultural learning as they value each other as persons of worth. Pastoral care needs to pay attention to the possibilities offered in this regard. At the local level, some churches provided similar opportunity for persons to work co-operatively; but given the expectation that they be intentional sponsors of pastoral care, a lot more effort could have been made had churches been more sensitive to the wide range of pastoral opportunities available to them.

Mention must be made of the learning that resulted from locals interacting with their Caribbean partners (*Caribbean Connections*). Again, the material culture reflects this. There are restaurants now catering for new Caribbean migrants, an indication

that Montserratian cuisine has been positively affected by the intercultural exchanges that have occurred. We have seen that a shift occurred in local attitudes to other Caribbean persons who were later viewed as helpers rather than as competitors. In theological terms, the newcomers were valued as gifted persons, agents delivering some of the gracious provision of God. This development is significant in the utilisation of *shared Christian praxis* for promoting helpful human relationships.

3. Growth in Religious and Spiritual Faith

Throughout the study thus far, there have been references by persons who felt that they had grown spiritually as a consequence of their experience of disaster.

Psychological, theological and educational perspectives presented so far help to illustrate and to validate the claim.

Some of the claimants have reviewed their patterns of slavish adherence to prescriptions given by their churches as institutions. This observation strongly suggests a maturation of rather than a decline in their personal faith. Many persons have undertaken critical appraisal of their past conduct in light of their experiences in the disaster situation.

We have also seen that much of their critical appraisal has been, in essence, theological reflection. This topic will be treated in the next sub-section which looks at some questions of meaning that are clearly defined as theological ones.

4. Critical Theological Reflection on Disaster

Questions of meaning verbalised in songs and poems during the Montserrat volcanic experience make it obvious that persons have re/interpreted historical events from a theological perspective.⁷⁷ Creative artists used different media to communicate theological understanding. Their messages were well received as was indicated by numerous positive references made to these during the field research.

In *Eruption of Corruption*, “Cupid” uses the jargon of volcanology to state theological concerns.⁷⁸ His catalogue of the evils of the country could be viewed as

⁷⁷ There has been some recent exploration of the use the Caribbean musical genre, dub, for expression of popular theology. See Beckford, R., 2002, “Prophet of Dub: Dub as a heuristic for theological reflection”, *Black Theology: An International Journal*, 67-82.

⁷⁸ Francis, H., 1995, “Eruption of Corruption” in *Take De Road*, Olveston, Montserrat: Qupid

expressing a negative outlook. It speaks, however, of the real soul searching that crisis conditions forced. People's experiences demanded that attention be paid to life's perplexing questions. His message, among others, called persons to examine their lived responses in relation to the beliefs they had learned and the faith statements they had been making concerning God.

Thrust into the crucible of the volcanic crisis, people tried to reconcile presuppositions and beliefs about God, humanity and creation as a whole. It must be noted here, that *cultural connotations* play a part in informing people's understandings of Christian Story/ Vision. For those living through the disaster, local pre-understandings constituted a complex theological picture in which competing claims about God featured prominently. Based on these claims, there were three main theological perspectives used to explain the situation caused by volcanic eruptions. Any one person was likely to hold some combination of these beliefs.

Punishment

First, a punitive framework was put forward mostly by certain preachers. There was in particular the roving preacher, "God's Messenger" who along with a few others are reputed to have warned that God was about to send a disaster far worse than Hurricane Hugo to visit Montserrat because of people's sinfulness.⁷⁹ Those predicting were a minority, but because they were authority figures within branches of the church, it is understandable that many, including children, believed them. In her poem *Dome Fever* a secondary student reveals her thoughts.

After many centuries of silence...
I can no longer tolerate the corruption of my people
They have caused me to shake with anger...
It is the evil deeds of my people
That have awakened the demon in me...
The demon they call the 'Dome'
And so, I will rise, and rise
Until my voice is truly heard⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Davison, op. cit., p.79. "God's Messenger" confirmed this in our interview of April 16, 2004.

⁸⁰ Greenaway, D. 1996, "Dome Fever", p. 76, in Fergus, H, ed., *Eruption*

Initially, many persons lived in fear of God's impending punishment, but this preoccupation did not continue for very long. As they became more familiar with 'the demon that they call they the 'Dome', viewing photos and videos of it, as scientists educated them about the dome and what was happening beneath it, as people accepted that life continued in spite of the eruptions, the dome became less of 'the demon that they fear'. They could not equate this demon with the God they had come to know. While fatalistic acceptance continues for some, the belief that Montserratians were being punished by God has been rejected as popular theology. The SXP1 reflection discussed earlier in this chapter reflects many voices from the community that reject this view.

Providence

Secondly, some persons from the church and wider community preferred to explain things within a framework of divine providence. This comes out in numerous creative works such as *Have a Little Faith*.

I say to the survivors have a little faith.
If insurance don't pay you, have a little faith.
Mourn not your loss
De Lord will help you ...
Those who suffer natural disaster ...
Even economic disaster...⁸¹

The singers here acknowledge the reality of systemic evil. With the removal of insurance cover for many as the volcanic activity escalated, people were victims of an unjust economic system. The song presents God as the merciful provider. The message is that no one should feel herself/ himself at the mercy of insurance companies. Where these corrupt forces would oppress, 'de Lord will help'. The words 'mourn not your loss' do not communicate lack of sympathy but rather constitute a summons to look into God's possibility, to 'have a little faith'. It conjures Jesus' invitation to "have faith the size of a mustard seed."⁸² The call to focus energies towards future potential rather than in lamenting the past may sound uncaring, but with the right support, it could facilitate positive adjustments to one's

⁸¹ Cassell, A., Weekes, E., "Have a Little Faith"

⁸² Matthew 17:20 NRSV, Luke 17:6 NRSV

theology. It is an approach more likely to encourage hope among those whose present situation looks grim.

In the writings of children and adults, one reads about their expectations of God's sufficient provision for and protection in their situation.⁸³

A ten year old remembers the created order in her prayer.

Oh Soufrière Hills Volcano
What a mystery you are
What power you contain
Magma flowing through your veins
Restructuring the face of our land
Turning stones into sand
Bringing paradise to its knees
Destroying our trees
Oh Lord I pray
Help us to live another day.⁸⁴

In this interview, a senior citizen answers my question regarding her seemingly fatalistic acceptance of the disaster as 'the work of the Lord'.

* So how you would explain the fact that some people had to move and others were quite comfortable in their home? You still see this as the work of the Lord?

CS2: Well, is the Lord's doing because he still leave a part that they that had to move had a place to go! Well if it wasn't the work of the Lord, all of us would have to go from here. And thank God, a bit of it is left that we can appreciate. Of that I am convinced, and where I convince, I appreciate it.

(Interview SC2, March 10, 2004)

She had one major criterion for attributing volcanic activity to God. It was the fact that some place was provided for people to live. That pointed to providence which was consistent with her understanding of God.

Instruction

⁸³ Silcott, J, 1997, "The Volcano Experience", in, *The Voices of Our Children*, Woodlands, Montserrat: St. Augustine School

⁸⁴ White, D., 1996, "Soufrière Hills Volcano" in *The Voices of Our Children*

Thirdly, an instructional framework provided a schema for explaining what had happened

The island's leading poet wrote.

Dressed in flaming underwear
Soufrière opened a new bible
in her pulpit on the hills
to teach us the arithmetic of days ...⁸⁵

So there were different explanations put forward. It is natural that because these were irreconcilable at certain points, they would provoke further reflection. People rejected one or other proposition only after weighing it against alternate points of view.

Movement 4: Dialectical Hermeneutics to Appropriate Story/ Vision to Participants' Stories and Visions

The foregoing examination of Montserratian responses in disaster was to identify elements useful for Christian pastoral care. On this basis, one can suggest resources/ possibilities for pastoral care which are congruent with *Christian Story/ Vision* but which have not, in practice, been valued as such.

To address this problem, one has to look carefully at the meaning of *Christian Story/ Vision* in the context of *shared Christian praxis*. *Christian Story/Vision* reminds us of the corporate nature and the charismatic functions of ministry. It emphasizes the caring community as charismatic, with variously equipped persons called to be stewards of divine grace. A lay leader's previously stated dissatisfaction with the church's response in the disaster situation is instructive.

I'm not sure that the church has even addressed the whole idea of how people should respond ...in the business of being good stewards of what resources they have...we need to learn from these situations and apply them to life's problems.

(CL-D3, February 24, 2004, cited in Ch. 5)

The comment suggests that, in the context of the Montserrat disaster, pastoral practice has not been true to a Christian position of emphasising the responsibility

⁸⁵ Fergus, H., 1998, "Bible on the Hill" in *Lara Rains and Colonial Rites*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, p.80. See App.1.12.

that giftedness implies. Historical church practice has been part of the problem. There has been the tendency, in Christian circles, to discourage the expression of certain gifts, for example, those requiring physical demonstrations of human emotions, a feature often associated with the gifts discussed earlier.

We referred to “Cupid’s” use of the expressions ‘in our common nature’ and ‘we are one people’. These emphasise another related fundamental of Christian faith - belief in our common humanity. Doctrines that emphasise ‘our common nature’ as beings created in the divine image remind us of the need to uphold the integrity of human persons. This underscores the place of theological anthropology in pastoral care. We have a passionate God and pastoral care needs to take human passion seriously. It should facilitate expression of emotions as a means to realising people’s humanness and actualising their connectedness to their Creator. Bigoted positions that present passionate human emotions as a sinful liability, for example denying the positive worth of emotional expression in joyful dance or in productive anger, should be dismissed. Effective pastoral practices involve

... verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication, aimed at preventing, relieving or facilitating persons coping with, anxieties.⁸⁶

The question arises as to whether the promotion of particular Caribbean and Montserratian cultural elements in Christian pastoral care amounts to a ‘religious garnishing of culture’.⁸⁷ This could be another indication of what Stein refers to as ‘the intransigent unwillingness of the theological community’ to adopt a more relevant theological anthropology.⁸⁸ The promise of *Shovelling* having therapeutic value elsewhere, as is indicated by the psychologist’s reference to its use in different North American settings, is noteworthy. It speaks of the potential of the resource to help persons transcend not only in the context in which it arose, but elsewhere. It is a promise that the gifts from a particular setting may have some universal value.

Stein’s call for a new anthropology more consistent with the doctrines of creation, when taken seriously, promotes understanding of the affective dimensions in pastoral

⁸⁶ Lartey, *In Living Colour*, p.7

⁸⁷ This is a concern raised by Watty in his consideration of the imposition of an alien Western culture. The author’s aim was to address the possibility of ‘the message of Christ becoming redundant’ in the face of an ascendant Western culture. A corollary exists to his concern is that of marginalised cultural elements assuming ascendancy and so perpetuating past error. See Watty, op. cit., p.x

⁸⁸ Stein, op. cit., p. 21

care. Sectors of the Montserrat population generally combine more somatic African religious expressions with western means for refreshment of body, mind, and spirit. On the surface, much of what people engaged in, for example dancing to *Shovelling*, might have seemed to be anything but spiritual. In a context of secularism, some of the practices could be judged to be purely entertainment. But looking through the lens of a new anthropology that lays emphasis on the 'creational continuities of somatic existence', pastoral care can appropriate previously overlooked cultural resources such as those that have been exposed in the hermeneutic dialogue between the wide realm of *Christian Story/ Vision* and current pastoral praxis in Montserrat.

Finally, it is worth reiterating a concern stated in Chapter Three: Christian affirmation of one God for all suggests a public context for ministry. By implication, it pre-empts a separation into private and public, secular and sacred, and demands the integration of life and faith. Pastoral practices should value the collective gifts of the serving community and envision broader horizons for the employment of these gifts and graces for a common humanity.

Thus far, this study has shown that social, political and cultural histories are all interwoven to create the arena for the delivery of pastoral care. It involves widely differing means by which humans gain transcendence. In the case of those living in Montserrat with an erupting volcano, the context for care comprised a range of historic factors and how these impacted on people's understanding of biblical and other Christian traditions.

To continue this dialectic between *Christian Story/Vision* and the situation of participants in the research, I repeat a lay leader's judgment on the church's lack of effectiveness in teaching new attitudes.

I'm not sure that the church has even addressed the whole idea of how people should respond ...in the business of being good stewards of what resources they have... I just feel that we need to learn from these situations and apply them to life's problems.

The perceived failure may have to do with the institutional church's interpretation of biblical traditions concerning charisma. There has been the tendency to a restrictive understanding of the Spirit's gifts and of the arena in which these gifts are useful. Even where creativity has been entertained within this narrow perception, for example in the production of music and in drama of church liturgies in Western societies, these expressions have further served to marginalise the creative contributions of other cultures.

In the Caribbean for example, in its efforts at acculturation of African slaves to European cultural conventions, the church throughout the colonial and neo-colonial eras, and sometimes in contemporary society, has systematically undermined African cultural traditions. Take for example the bans on drumming and dancing which were associated with *maroons* and seen as a rebellious and “heathen” practices. In Montserrat, the legacy of slavery and colonialism continues to take effect in suggesting conformity to European culture. One enduring consequence of European cultural hegemony is the church’s failure to value the indigenous creative expressions of all its peoples in their varied contexts. But the persistence of such expressions is indicative of their value in the people’s visions of themselves and for their life.

Also, western cultures have tended to impose on the colonised a compartmentalised view of life that is reflected in exclusivist attitudes to puzzling indigenous expressions of faith. Not only have certain indigenous cultural expressions been sidelined because they were regarded as inferior to the coloniser’s, but sometimes because their spiritual significance remained unrecognised. In the context of the Montserrat volcanic crisis, indigenous expressions in the creative arts, in particular songs like *Shovelling* were employed to promote healing and community, but the methods used were never embraced by the official church as valid means for pastoral care.

Consequently, the church has excluded some of the very gifts it requires for effective service today. Whereas Christian perspectives emphasise the responsibility that accompanies giftedness, church attitudes towards some gifts have prevented them from being exercised. Some sections of the church continue to scorn local art-forms and relegate them to the category of secular. A survey of Montserratian churches’ attitudes to the songs produced by their members who are calypsonians will illustrate this. Among those whose songs have been mentioned in this research, only “Belonger”, a Catholic, has found acceptance in having written songs used in worship. Notwithstanding movements within the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) to encourage the use of Caribbean musical genres and current efforts by the MCCA to produce a songbook more reflective of Caribbean life, Christian communions in Montserrat officially maintain a stance towards calypsos that ranges from outright condemnation to constant criticism

In the wider community, however, African Caribbean traditions have continued, resistant to the western pattern of a sacred- secular divide. The African ethos of spirituality pervading the whole realm of life remains a strong undercurrent to people's expressions of faith. This feature may provide an avenue for recognition of gifts in the wider community.

Movement 5: Decision/ Response for Lived Christian Faith

One pastor attempted to summarise the critical lessons to be learnt from his reflection on the Montserrat crisis.

We need to place on record at some place, the whole question of people moving from one place to another ... the internal migration, and what people brought with them... coping with the fellowship, the things which people held on to which they were able to use as a means of binding us together even though we were dispersed. I also think that we also need to share the whole idea of being able now to integrate everybody into the community with less hostility...what we are able to ... sort of "have, pick up, come, work" live, enjoy one another without that level of hostility, so at least people can try to figure out what is that element.

(2nd interview, CH-E, March 23, 2004)

1. Valuing of Indigenous Resources

One obvious need is for pastoral care to actively sponsor the usage of indigenous resources for its processes.

The speaker above invites us to focus on resources present in the situation, 'what people brought with them...the things which people held on to which they were able to use as a means of binding us together even though we were dispersed'.

In the charismatic community, all gifts should be valued. Pastoral care needs to appropriate the giftedness noted among participants in this research and in the wider context for care. *There is the need to recognise and to use the gifts and graces hidden in intra-cultural spaces because they have for too long been marginalised.* If intra-cultural communication is allowed to inform to current re-interpretations of Pauline traditions, we can affirm the place in pastoral care for the resources that issued from human response during the volcanic eruptions.

As one writer commented, ‘people are writing from their hearts.’⁸⁹ Denial of the worth of their expressions is tantamount to opposing the anthropology inherent in doctrines of creation, that humans are created in the divine image. A theological anthropological approach that helps pastoral care to accept and to maximise the cathartic potential of resources available from local cultural ways is useful. Such an approach, because it identifies directly with the persons giving and receiving care in a particular context, is more likely to succeed in promoting uninhibited expressions of the human psyche, individual and collective. In this way, pastoral care could help to address some of the undesirable pietistic linkages that exist between expressions of human affection, for example anger, and sin.

The use of local art forms for pastoral care is, therefore, highly recommended. Not only does such an approach represent a more holistic theological anthropological method. It can help to create a less threatening environment in which participants more naturally give and receive care. In affirming their worth as human beings, and in integrating issues from different areas of their lives, this shared praxis is more consistent with biblical teaching than previously used methods have been.

2. Promoting Inter-cultural Communication

Pastoral care must sponsor efforts at reconciliation through organising events to promote intercultural communication.

The need to promote dialogue both within the local subcultures and between Montserratian and other cultures was identified as a desirable response in the reflection *The Challenge of Difference* in Chapter Five. The focus of the recommendation was, however, on the type of training pastoral leaders need. In this chapter, reflection on some positive developments in the protracted disaster situation further emphasised that need.

I also believe that even from a pastoral standpoint, there needs to be something said that even when future ministers come, that besides their own experience which they bring, they can see things which were valuable to the community, and things that are not harmful, or which are not negative, but things which helped to keep the bond together.
(CH-E, March 23, 2004)

⁸⁹Fergus, H., interview of February 24, 2004.

The reflection showed that healing movement was possible within the situation, and that *the requirement for such healing existed long before the disaster arose*. The need, as we have seen, was complicated by historical political factors influencing people's reaction to particular occurrences during the volcanic crisis. In revisiting some aspects of their cultural traumas, persons were sometimes able to give vent to longstanding anger. Such need must be given serious attention in pastoral care. Events that focus on promoting inter-cultural communication are useful in this regard.⁹⁰

In the opening statement of Movement 5, the pastoral leader also recommended that the community share its successes in 'being able now to integrate everybody into the community with less hostility.' The reference to 'less hostility' is significant. Much residual anger remains evident. As part of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the start of volcanic eruptions in July 2005, some leaders on the island participated in reconciliation seminars (note 90). This effort, sponsored by the office of the Chief Minister, was in response to the observation of clinical psychologists that there were unresolved internal conflicts. The nagging question remains as to whether the situation could have been improved sooner through more effective approaches to pastoral care. Failure is, however, inherent to pastoral care. But once recognised it can stimulate the development of a more helpful approach that emphasises an intercultural hermeneutic in helping persons to accommodate difference.

3. Affirming the Continuing Role for Pastoral Care

This study highlights the continuing expectations of persons that Christian congregations will continue to exercise pastoral care functions. What they demand is that the approaches to care be more sensitive to their pastoral needs and personal concerns as individuals and as communities.

In the course of this research, I encountered only one person who objected to churches serving as agencies for care. The objector, who is referred to in Chapter

⁹⁰ The local government accepted that this was a real need and sponsored the first such reconciliation seminar in July 2005 to mark the tenth anniversary of the start of the eruptions. Two Caribbean clinical psychologists and two Caribbean theologians including me were the facilitators. The seminar provided a forum for community leaders to discuss hurts associated with the volcanic crisis that had not been addressed. The concerns that surfaced in the reflection *the Challenge of Difference* arose although the participants were unaware of the contents of this dissertation.

Two, first raised the issue during a radio programme aired on November 29, 2004. Our interview plans were aborted twice, so it is not possible to explain his objections. However, universal acceptance of any belief or ideology should not be sought. Most likely there are many more persons who would ignore churches as agencies for caring.

But wherever the church serves its mission, pastoral care remains part of its ministry. In the Caribbean, participatory religion is still the choice of the majority of persons. For an indication of the place of religious faith in the Montserrat context in particular, is useful to refer to Ring's findings from her study into the coping resources of community leaders during the volcanic eruptions.

Another important aspect is the role spirituality and religious faith played for many of the participants as a means of coping and as a support system. Fifty-seven (57%) of the participants reported that their spiritual faith and praying was their greatest personal strength. Perhaps this is one of the greatest strengths of Caribbean people as well as Montserratians. One's spiritual strength can act as a stabilizing force in time times of disaster. Finding meaning in the tragic events of life is a common human response, and one that could be supported in a myriad of ways. And people without this foundation may have more difficulty in coping with their losses during disasters.

And according to the information obtained, since the greatest strength and best outcome of this disaster has been increased reliance on God, the role of the church in bereavement support and outreach programmes could provide more services with additional assistance.⁹¹

The research outcomes emphasise the church's need to take seriously its continuing role in providing pastoral care. Since systems of support are important to the development and maintenance of positive spiritual attributes, providing supportive and enabling pastoral care in contexts of disaster remains an important responsibility. Christian pastoral care has an important and unique role to play in Christian contexts where persons expect the church to provide support. And since it understands the totality of creation as the realm of divine influence and activity, it has an important service to deliver in other contexts within society in general.

4. Shared Christian Praxis as Tool for Pastoral Care in Disaster

The study has shown too, that the reality of personal loss, physical or symbolic, does not necessarily work against one's spirituality. Quite to the contrary, the experience

⁹¹ Ring, op. cit.

of loss such as experienced in Montserrat may frame an environment in which spiritual strengths rise to prominence. The praxis oriented approach to doing theology employed in this research encouraged persons to review their beliefs and attitudes together in the light of their experiences during the volcanic eruptions. As ongoing recipients of revelatory insights, they grew in spiritual maturity.

As stated in the Methodology, focus groups participants judged their involvement in *shared Christian praxis* as personally stimulating and they felt encouraged to continue in theological reflection. Their conscious engagement in its Movements as they reflected together on their experiences of pain, insecurity, failure, loss, and coping, became a support mechanism in itself. If indeed ‘only those who feel supported can have the hope to sustain them in adversity’, then this method of doing theology can be viewed as one mechanism for providing the support necessary to encourage resilience.⁹²

Conclusion

Progression through the movements of the final theological reflection has illustrated how human understanding and expressions about God may be influenced by a range of historical factors. In so doing, the research highlights areas where pastoral care can more effectively interface with the social, cultural and political realities that persons experience.

The research identifies specific indigenous resources that have facilitated persons’ coping in the context of disaster. The gifts of creative artistic expression, which are interpreted within a framework of grace, have been undervalued in official Christianity in Montserrat. There is evidence, however, of their contribution to human coping ability on Montserrat. The churches must now wisely appropriate these resources to validate models of pastoral care for their context.

This would help an approach to exercising faith as a collective priesthood which values its varied gifts of grace. In fulfilling its ministry within the framework of divine-human activity, the church must live out its faith. Through engagement in the recommended caring activities that promote human worth, the church speaks of God’s solidarity with humans and can continue to express faith and to represent God’s presence in the world.

⁹² Monteleone, op.cit.p.99

Pastoral Care in Disaster: A Theological Reflection

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This research sought, through critical reflection using the theological method of *shared Christian praxis*, to articulate pastoral theological perspectives highlighted in situations arising in the context of the Montserrat volcanic disaster. The success of the inquiry is evident in the contributions derived from three main areas.

1. The application of *shared Christian praxis*, both in the contexts of field research and subsequent data analysis was subject to critique that made for the articulation of contextually relevant perspectives.
2. Through highlighting some of the particularities of the Montserrat situation during the course of the research, critical use of the method suggests the potential of *shared Christian praxis* as a method for doing theology in Montserrat and the wider Caribbean.
3. The inquiry achieved its stated aim of articulating perspectives to inform pastoral practice both in its routines and in disaster situations. The research noted significant features and distinctive resources that can inform pastoral theology and facilitate the delivery of pastoral care in Montserrat and elsewhere.

1. Critical application of shared Christian praxis

A Tool for Reflexive Praxis

In Chapter Two, I presented a rationale for my use of *shared Christian praxis* as a way of engaging in this collaborative research. My approach combined the ethnographic method for accessing the understandings of participants in the research context with use of *shared Christian praxis* as a way of structuring the necessary theological reflection. This called for adjustments in the application of the theological method which has been used for education in Christian faith and pastoral ministry.

In this dissertation, critiques have been presented that address shortcomings in its use for education purposes. These, in particular the insights of SteinhoffSmith, speak to its limitations as an approach that requires the authorised interpreters to serve as the

main resources for informing the process of reflection which is inherent to *shared Christian praxis*. Additionally, the concerns regarding its use for education relate to a possible power imbalance between the group leader and other participants.

I therefore used a critiqued version of Groome's proposed method to facilitate my access to the knowledge to be derived from reflection in the research setting.

Adjustments made possible an encounter with a wide range of human experience characterised by respectful listening to the Other. Voices of the unorthodox were allowed to speak. In my role as researcher and analyst, I brought voices from the research setting into a conversation that allowed me to engage with them in *shared Christian praxis*.

In so doing, the potential of this method to inform the pastor engaged in reflexive praxis was realised. *My approach to shared Christian praxis highlighted how, through its use for reflexive praxis, the clergy leader is informed and educated for renewed praxis*. Following Movements 1 through 5 required the practitioner reflecting on others' reflections to attend to her faith expressions in ways that both inform and transform the reflective self. This facilitated the ongoing development of a critical self awareness informed by the context for Christian ministry

2. Shared Christian praxis in the Caribbean

Contextual Training for Ministry

Critical awareness of one's self and one's situation, we have seen, is essential for the pastor who is called to facilitate relationships. A failing of pastoral training in the Caribbean has been the practice of assuming a strict ethos of Christian orthodoxy for ministerial formation. Such models of seminary training for ministers are part of the legacy of Western Christianity which has not responded adequately to Caribbean contexts. *Engagement in shared Christian praxis can be one way of enhancing ministerial training by bringing pastors into dialogue with the real life contexts for service which constantly critique officially accepted Christian norms*. Trainees can participate in reflections where the marginalised and the unorthodox are accepted as subject-agents-in-relationship. In this way, a clearer understanding of social situations is achieved which helps to prepare the pastor for the type of leadership and ministry to be exercised.

Doing Theology in the Caribbean

The research has shown that *shared Christian praxis* is a viable method for doing theological reflection in Montserrat. Since the peoples of Montserrat and the wider Caribbean share common bonds of history and culture, successful application of the method in Montserrat suggests its suitability as a method for doing ongoing pastoral theology, at the local church level, in the wider Caribbean.

But Montserrat has a small population in comparison to other Caribbean territories. At the regional level, it is also important to note that each territory has its distinctiveness in cultural and political history and expression. The complexities of religious faiths and faith expressions vary. Whereas a high level of inter-church cooperation is more easily feasible in Montserrat and facilitated the doing of Christian theology at the island level in a common forum, that may not be achievable in certain other settings. Further research in other Caribbean settings can determine how the method can be used for pastoral theological reflection there.

The success of this method for this research, however, indicates its potential for facilitating reflections in situations of disaster. In this regard, it can be recommended for use in the wider Caribbean and elsewhere.

3. Pastoral care and the ministry of the church

In addition to the above observations which have direct implications for the formation of ordained and lay persons who participate in pastoral care, this research presents perspectives that directly inform pastoral practices.

While the volcanic disaster seriously provoked human need on Montserrat, this inquiry into some of the human problems surfacing in the crisis situation revealed pre-existing pastoral concerns and issues that had for too long been ignored.

Pastoral inaction is attributable to the following:

1. inconsistencies and /or inadequacies in ecclesial theologies that contributed to
2. deficiencies in pastoral training as evidenced in insufficient self-awareness, lack of counselling skills and ineffective or inappropriate leadership in the disaster situation

Inconsistent / Inadequate Theologies

Official Christian theology presents the church as a caring community and describes pastoral care in a way that suggests it to be a collaborative exercise in the ministry of the church. *Through its inherently hierarchical approach to ministry, however, official Christianity in Montserrat has, to a large extent, frustrated the development of humanising pastoral practices since it continues to encourage a “dependency syndrome” identifiable among Caribbean peoples.* This trend was evident during the disaster, at a time when persons needed inspiration to take greater responsibility for their actions and their futures, and thereby participate in their own healing.

A continuing focus on hierarchical rather than networking styles of leadership marginalises lay persons, frustrates the actualisation of pastoral care as corporate activity and effectively denies the charismatic functions of the church’s ministry. *In the situation of disaster this served to weaken the church’s potential to care for its membership and for the wider Montserrat community.*

In failing to actively sponsor their membership’s participation in shared ministry, most branches of Christianity continue a trend of bad stewardship of their human resource potential. This is dehumanising for those who are omitted since they are not encouraged to realise their worth as persons made in the divine image. They include some persons whose coping and caring skills may be superior to those of the officially sponsored pastoral leaders, or whose life experiences make them more suited to serve as caregivers, but who are marginalised on account of their failure or refusal to sponsor orthodox Christianity.

Associated with the church’s failure to tap its collective human resource potential there were unreasonably high demands placed on pastors and their families. *The churches as institutions failed to care for their pastors during a crisis that highlighted their vulnerability and increasing need for pastoral care.*

This omission was in part due to the ministers’ own lack of self-awareness or inappropriate training. In other cases, it may have been contingent upon the church’s self image. Traditional imagery used to communicate the pastor’s role in caring has presented ordained pastors as having superior spirituality and coping skills. The church’s presentation of the biblical pastoral image of shepherd in Montserrat, as elsewhere, has tended to discourage ministers’ perceptions of themselves as vulnerable. *An unfortunate consequence is that these pastoral leaders are unable to*

exercise ministry as “wounded healers” in such situations as disaster that require them to demonstrate sensitivity and compassion out of their own recognition of personal vulnerability.

Another disempowering facet of church practice in Montserrat is to be found in the enduring legacy of slavery and colonialism and slavery. Official church practice continues to devalue its own giftedness. *While its faith claims suggest human worth, the church has not created an environment in which the worth of many Montserratians is valued since their special gifts are not embraced. This is particularly troubling for Christian pastoral care which would be enhanced if it appropriated indigenous resources such as art forms which have been used to great benefit in facilitating human coping in the context of the Montserrat volcanic disaster.*

An agenda for empowering congregations must focus on the roles these groups play in the transformation of God’s wide world. The structures and ways in which they use resources peculiar to their context must be determined by needs which will suggest means to find transcendence in the specific situation.

Deficiencies in Pastoral Training

Self awareness

The point has been made of the pastor’s need for a self awareness within contextual reality. In order to exercise pastoral ministry characterised by sensitivity and appropriateness for the situation, every congregation needs to “know its place,” that is, to have a growing awareness of its social, cultural and political features that influence the types of ministry required in that situation. Self awareness in the congregation is enhanced when its pastoral leader is sufficiently self aware.

In the Montserrat context, there were critical cases where self awareness was absent to the extent that some ordained and lay pastoral leaders denied or suppressed their fears, thereby preventing or delaying their healing and forcing needless burdens on themselves and others.

Counselling Skills and Activities

While the average pastor is not expected to be skilled in psychotherapy, in the everyday course of ministry s/he will be required to serve as a counsellor. In the

intense human crises present in the initial phases of the Montserrat volcanic eruptions, the majority of persons sought faith based guidance for decision making, but insufficient pastoral guidance was available.

One of the reasons why pastors are poorly equipped to offer counselling, which is an integral part of pastoral ministry, is pastoral theology's reluctance in promoting theologically based approaches to counselling. The discipline still needs to explore ways of incorporating insights from the clinical sciences within a holistic framework.

This research, through its outcomes, validates *shared Christian praxis* as one way of promoting confidence and competence among pastors and laypersons alike. *Shared Christian praxis encourages the means by which people acting together can simultaneously reflect theologically on their experiences and provide support for each other. The Movements of this method can be seen as a support mechanism to enable persons to recreate their own lives and become resilient.*

There are also indications of artistic expressions in Montserratian culture that hold potential as tools for counselling processes in pastoral care. Some musical productions from the situation have been used to good effect. Also, this research has cited musical and poetic forms expressive of people's theological concerns. Further research is needed to determine how, for counselling purposes, the emotive and affective elements stimulated by music and song can best be attended to in combination with the theological reflection they inspire.

This research into pastoral care in disaster affirms the continuing role of Christian pastoral care. The church exists for the purpose of ministry. Pastoral care is its ministry. In Montserrat and the wider Caribbean where a high level of participatory Christianity is evident, the church's responsibility to serve the wider community is significant.

The Caribbean is a region highly susceptible to natural disasters. The reflection on experiences of pastoral care in disaster is valuable for the Christian communities of faith throughout as they seek to act in solidarity with their wider communities.

Crises catalyse change. Occasions of disconnectedness and loss such as experienced in disaster often become opportunities for spiritual healing and growth. People will, no doubt, survive disasters whether or not churches truly represent communities of care. What can help to make change positive is a pastoral presence along with supporting pastoral practices that enable persons to adjust positively to their changed

situations and to find transcendence in the present so that hope is realised. In the contexts of such need opportunities are present for Christian pastoral care to serve its purpose within the broader framework of God's activity in the world.

Appendix 1: Songs and Poems

1.1. *Eruption of Corruption*

Source: Francis, H., "Cupid", 1995, *Take de Road*, Salem, Montserrat.

From deep in de centre in the core of a human heart
Magma of malice burning and it's tearing the heart apart
And an opening is rising that's penetrating the crust
Scientists never predicted that eruption is a must
All the evil that is in our hearts finally reach de surface
And like a river of lava moving at a deadly pace
It's an eruption of corruption
Poisonous gases causing mind pollution
The decision for evacuation
Resulted in an eruption of corruption

I smelling sulphur, I feel an earthquake; is then shopkeepers that sell
retail
The price of their rice and corned beef high on the rector scale
And some o' dem down in the shelter, they swear, curse, and what not
They drinking booze at the altar and they left with the government cot
And others who stayed in people's home making phreatic calls at will
And although they get full salary left a magmatic bill

It's an eruption ...

The chief with much dedication trying hard to keep de calm
But while he was busy watching de mountain, behind him was a
raging storm
But is not Luis and Marilyn that do de country worse
Winds blowing at political mileage, newspaper spread false reports
Wider than the English crater, higher than the New York dome
Relatives overseas get more rumours than we at home.

It's an eruption of corruption
Ashes of hate and mudflows of division
Opposition politician ...
On television causing an eruption of corruption

1.2. Have a Little Faith

Source: Weekes, E., "Reality" & Cassel, Alphonsus "Arrow", 1995, *Phat*, Arrow Music Ltd.

The islands in despair
Destruction everywhere
People living in fear
In the aftermath
Of nature's wrath- oh
It was a spectrum of horror
Such as never seen before
A sight of ruin
By Luis and Marilyn oh

*I say to de survivors- have a little faith
In time we can work wonders- have a little faith
Mourn not your loss
Forget the cost
All is not lost
It could have been worse
In times a wound shall mend
Let us rebuild again.
Even though rain a wet you have a little faith
Somehow you bound to get through; have a little faith.*

Our dreams, our plans
A lifetime work is gone.
From whence will help come?
Many are still crying
They lost everything- oh
Roofless schools and hospitals
Churches are broken walls
In every island we see
Plenty of misery, o-oh

*I say to the survivors ...
You have no water, no power, have a little...
Hard times will soon be over, have a little ...*

No task is insurmountable
It's a regional struggle
We can rise up from the rubble
It is by your hand
Your country will rebound
You cannot leave your post
Now your country needs you most
Take pride in your land
Make it your ambition
To build your country ...
Build it back again!

*I say to the survivors ...
If insurance don't pay you, mourn not your loss
De Lord will help you, have a little faith
Antigua, Barbuda ...
St. Maarten, Anguilla ...
St. Thomas, Tortola...
Montserrat, Bermuda ...
Those who suffer natural disaster ...
Even economic disaster...
Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana ...
Barbados and Puerto Rico...
Follow de Arrow for a brighter tomorrow*

1.3. One Day at a Time

Source: Weekes, E, "Reality" & Cassell, A., 1996, "Arrow", *Ride de Riddim*, Arrow Music Ltd.

Another explosion in the night
Everyone tremble with fright
Keep the faith don't lose your mind
Let's go on one day at a time

Another ash cloud rises high
It grips your soul, darkens the sky
But to this land our hearts are bind
Let's go on one day at a time

A lifetime to build, just a second to lose
Just like sitting on a burning fuse
But giving up never cross my mind
I'll go on one day at a time

Some may ask why stay on?
Why so much love for this little land?
Though our lives may be on the line
We go on one day at a time.

Another emergency evacuation
Galloway's wall is falling down
Straight to St. Patrick's straight to Long Ground
Dear old Plymouth is like a ghost town

Red alert, full seismicity
Increased volcanic activity
All de signs to remind mankind
We can only live one day at a time

This land was a paradise
Lush green hills and
Clear blue skies
Not because we covered with ash
We cyan leh we country die
Don't let it die ...

You gotta keep the faith... stay in de shelter
You gotta like de food...love you and your neighbour
We in dis together so let's be strong
Life must go on...

1.4. Ultimate Sacrifice

Source: Francis, H., "Cupid", 1996, *The Ultimate Sacrifice*, Unlimited Access Studios, Olveston, Montserrat.

I can hear the sound of the mountain roar
Louder than ever before
An instinct tells me to leave but I tell myself just one moment more
Now that deadly flow approaches me
Look there is no escape
And in my final moments
No one hears my desperate call for help

My heart aches as the wrath of nature engulfs me
My blood boils though the pain I couldn't bear
My feet ache, no longer able to carry me
When I feel for them they were no longer there
Well I spent two years making sacrifice
Taking risk without compromise
But today, this day, I pay the ultimate price
Today I make the ultimate sacrifice

Now I hear the voice of my relatives
"Please don't put your life on the line."
And each time I would tell them "God is with us, all would be fine."
Now I fear the shock that would take them
Oh- when they hear the news
And how much it would shake them
When they heard of the end that I dared to choose

My heart aches as the wrath of nature engulfs me ...

No greater love can one show

Than he who his life lay down
And I wonder would I change anything if there's a second time around
Yes, many would say I'm foolish
Should have trod the path of safety instead
But as a farmer making my daily bread
And in the meantime my country must be fed
In a flash now an angel
I watch my people as they try to cope
How I want to assure them
That in the midst of disaster
There is always hope

And from my celestial position
I can still share their pain
But if we now get our act together then I would not have died in vain.

*My heart aches as the wrath of nature engulfs me
My blood boils though the pain I couldn't bear
My feet ache, no longer able to carry me
When I felt for them they were no longer there
Well I spent my life making sacrifice
Taking licks without compromise
But today I paid the ultimate price
Today, this day, I made the ultimate sacrifice*

1.5. This is It

Source: Greenaway, R, “Zunky”, 1998, *Little Island Live Volcano: The Songs*, Zunky Music Ltd.

Day slowly turned to night-
a day that was filled with continuous rockfalls and ashflows
An 8:30 p.m. respite
but then we forgot
that the end
we know not.
Only Jah knows.
Suddenly out of the black
an explosion
ripped out a scar
in the heart
of the lava dome.

A deafening roar
filled the entire nation
creating motion
of the whole population
north.

I can recall
the drama unfolding
People were scrambling
and sirens wailing
Here's what I heard
on my walkie-talkie radio

Do you copy?
Where's the check point officer?
Heading north.
Where's the priest and the doctor?

Heading north.

The commissioner he was heading north,

The Chief Minister, he was heading north.

They saying "Oh-oh

This is it

The 7th anniversary of Hugo

Oh--oh"

In a jiffy

the north main road

was filled with vehicles

one long line bumper to bumper.

Country in panic mode

rushing, just hustling

and hoping

that north

would be safer.

Lickstick

and pumice

and gravel

were falling

Hot ash

was scattered

on every square inch

of ground.

Cars and trucks skidding.

Windshields were shattered.

Electricity and ZJB

all gone down.

I still recall ...

1.6. Shovelling

Source: Greenaway, R, “Zunky”, 1998, *Little Island Live Volcano: The Songs*, Zunky Music Ltd.

Eh eh
When a crisis challenges a nation
Men will rise to the occasion
A mountain growing
Ash keep falling
Soon as the ashing stop
Men out there shovelling

You should hear them - Shovelling, shovelling, shovelling,
If you only see them- Shovelling, shovelling the rooftops, shovelling
Clad for the task- Shovelling, shovelling, shovelling
In their dust mask- . Shovelling, shovelling, shovelling
One motion - dip, toss, dip, toss
Two motion - dip, toss, dip, toss

You put it to the check point
Headed for the ash zone
And what's your mission?
Just checking up on my home.
No delaying, they don't want their roofs drop
So they taking action and shoveling non-stop

One motion ...
Double up the motion ...
You should hear them ...
Sweat on their brow ...
All over you see them...
OK for now...
One motion ...

Ash is heavy load.

Men on rooftops galvanize or shingle
Answering nature with the hoe and the shovel
No complaining though out in the hot sun
Just concentrating on getting the job done ...

1.7. Keep the Faith

Source: Greenaway, R., "Zunky", 1998, *Little Island Live Volcano: The Songs*, Zunky Music Ltd.

On a July 95 evening
Like the battering of an axe
A stubborn volcanic crisis
Set this island under attack
It was just as we were recovering
From an extended recession
That this monster rose up to haunt us
To push us back to the ground

*Montserrat, no cry, see the light
This volcanic situation will end
And we'll rise again
Yes, we'll smile and dance once again
So don't panic when you hear evacuation.
Every disaster must cease ...
And don't panic when the ash cover the nation
After turmoil, there'll be peace ...
We won't run and we won't quit
But we'll learn to live with it
If we keep the faith*

To cope with this new impostor
We had to learn vocabulary
Just to understand all the details
The scientists give to we
Like earthquake swarm band and tremors
And hot pyroclastic flows,
All kind of seismic events
That each Montserratian now knows

Montserrat, no cry ...

So don't panic when the mud flows like a river

Every disaster must cease ...

And don't panic when the earthquake make you shudder

After turmoil there'll be peace ...

The worst thing is the stress it bring us

It set the nation at war

Its villages and its people

Against government and governor

Its residents against British

Is truth against false rumour

It's questioning all the EOC

It's parents against teacher

Montserrat, no cry ...

So don't panic though the dome is getting higher

And don't panic at the red hot mount of fire.

After turmoil there'll be peace ...

1.8. Refugee

Source: Greenaway, R., "Zunky, 1998, *Little Island Live Volcano: The Songs*, Zunky Music Ltd.

I live in the North but come from the East
Walk down the road I can't get no peace
People asking me if I come to stay
You live in Central but come from the South
Shop in they shop can't open you mouth
I must be a refugee in me own country...Refugee!
Refugee in me own country...Refugee!

They tell me move from the danger zone
North of Belham safe haven
Thought I could blend in easy and settle down
Now that I move I see that I wrong
Negative vibes I get all day long
Some of the people don't want me around
Must I be a refugee ...

Move in with family and with friend
I become enemy in the end
Out of you house it's sure hard to feel at home
Move into shelter still feel de squeeze
Verbal abuse bring me to me knees
Think that I'm heading back to the danger-zone
I won't be a refugee ...

1.9. Little Island Live Volcano

Source: Greenaway, R., “Zunky”, 1998, *Little Island Live Volcano: The Songs*, Zunky Music Ltd.

Between green mountains one red mountain growing
In the day it's steaming and at night it's glowing
It's so exciting living in a land and knowing
That between two mountains a new mountain growing
You can see it getting higher every day
Sometimes a piece tumble off and give us a big display
You see it tumble, tumble, tumble
You hear it rumble, rumble, rumble

This little island has a live volcano..
Little island, live volcano...

We will write this chapter of our history saying
That between two mountains a new mountain growing.

1.10. Pay Off

Source: Lake, C. "Cepeke", 2000, *Pay Off*, Unlimited Access Studios, Olveston, Montserrat.

Too much wrong going on in this country
Wrong become right because of money
The perpetrators of the crime
Escape scotch free all the time
They vicious and dangerous
Demons living among them

The young teenager – get pay off
Thousands for the mother – get pay off
A member of the jury – get pay off
Big job, big salary – get pay off
Vice and corruption
Threatening this island
Pay off from the drugs man
Who bring things through customs
They crazy, they going out they minds
Is pay off, pay off, pay off.

People at the top of the bracket
Are the main ones running the racket
Because of the good name of their office
No body really take notice
They'll do anything
But one day a go come
When they'll be turn in
The Government Headquarters – get pay off
Millions of dollars – get pay off
Dough from Texas – Houston – get pay off
What is the main reason? – pay off
Vice and corruption ...

Tender flesh both sexes of society
Unscrupulous abuse constantly
Morality is a thing of the past
Wickedness reigns – How long it go last
It's a disgrace, Oh yes it's a shame
When justice no longer prevails
The girls for auntie Lou – get pay off
Not to say what the man do – get pay off
Father molest the daughter – get pay off
He silence the mother – get pay off
Vice and corruption...

This payoff scandal is unwise
On the internet make it more global
In the Congress, Parliament and Senate
Is pay off, pay off them fellas just get
Is the same style
Some want to adopt
But little Montserrat
Not ready for that.
Monica Lewinski – get pay off
Is there on the Emerald City – get pay off
Don't care the offense – get pay off
Money is their deliverance – get pay off
Vice and corruption ...

1.11. Me Package

Source: Francis, H., 1996, *Ultimate Sacrifice*, Unlimited Access Studios, Olveston, Montserrat

Darling leh we go home
Back home to Montserrat
Me navel string bury there
Everybody know that.
Hear they giving package
To go to England
And to the Caribbean
They offer ten thousand
I done find me passport
And it still mark British
Ten years in Antigua
But that doesn't change it.
I 'fraid de volcano
Say I aint going back
But for me package
I taking de ferry Jack.
I go look for me package
To go to England.
They say England nice
They say England sweet
Wheels on we feet
We skating on ice
Left Montserrat so long
Say I don't qualify
But Jenny and all gone
I can't see why shouldn't I.
Never been to London
My chance to be happy
I hear Rigley Market
Selling out clothes cheap, cheap
I go look for me package
I go look fu me package to go to England ...

Fifty pounds a week
Montserratians rejoice

1.12. Bible on the Hill

Source: Fergus, H., 1998, *Lara Rains & Colonial Rites*, Leeds: Peepal Tress Press, p.80

Dressed in flaming underwear

Soufriere opened a new bible

in her pulpit on the hills

to teach us arithmetic of days

in symbols red like fire

The first exodus

Was on an August Monday

Today is day two

of the second exodus

six whole days for the feast of fire

but the clouds lifted

on the seventh day

and behold another dome

rested on the mountain

after four months of toil

bringing the sum to three

an awful trinity

How many days I wonder

until domes-day

genesis

of the final examination and the con-

summation of all things

Will we pass
out
down
into the crater lake
or up
to God knows
where?

1.13. September Seventeen

Source: Meade, J., in, Waters, E., Ed, 1999, *The Caribbean Writer. Volume 13*, Kingshill, St. Croix, U.V.I., p. 49.

September seventeen

turns eighteen.

A rude awakening.

Soufriere hot belly

burst open

machine gun fire

of hardened magma.

Hell fires blaze

kindled by heaven's torches.

A thief in the night

to lighten our darkness.

Peals of thunder roar

a prelude to hell.

Goliath of a crusher

grinding rock

creating

ashen sand

for asphalt

shingle jingle

grating gravel

for devil music

on galvanize rooftop.

High time
To wake up
From slumber.

Is it not yet?
The hour at hand
Rocks miss Mr. Rock
Devil's granite chisel
Heaven's pumice sharpener
move the church.
An open door.
And stones cry out
Praise God !